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WRITINGS

OF THE

REV. THOMAS BECON,

CHAPLAIN TO ARCHBISHOP CRANMER, AND PREBENDARY OF CANTERBURY.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.
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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

The valuable work here presented to the Christian public is a reprint of the London edition, and comprehends the most valuable writings of the English Reformers. Their excellence has been generally appreciated, and their republication in the United States, where they are rarely to be met with, must be regarded as an auspicious event, as it may serve to diffuse and perpetuate those principles, in support of which the blood of the martyrs was shed, and for which the American Church is again called to contend. In presenting an exact reprint of the English edition, the Presbyterian Board of Publication do not wish to be considered as concurring in every form of expression or shade of sentiment to be found in these volumes. Their object is to present the Reformers as they appeared in their own writings, at a time when the church was just emerging

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from papal darkness. Still they appreciate the sound argument, evangelical doctrine and fervent piety which generally characterize their religious writings and can commend them to the discriminating reader.

It affords the Board unfeigned pleasure to state, that they have been encouraged to engage in this enterprise, by the liberality of an esteemed friend who has engaged to assume the entire expense of stereotyping the work. The sum requisite to accomplish this was more than *Five Thousand Dollars.*

The whole work is comprised in *Twelve* volumes, although each volume is complete and distinct in itself.

As the reader may be anxious to know upon what principles the English edition was prepared, the following information on the subject is extracted from the Postscript to that edition.

"The following particulars will explain the manner in which this work has been carried through the press. The pieces contained therein are without abridgment, unless where expressly mentioned. There are a few omissions which are necessary in a publication intended to be generally circulated, and to be useful at the present day. In other editions, the obsolete spelling has been laid aside, the

same plan is pursued in the present publication; the involved construction of sentences, common in writers of that period, has also been removed. Those words which have become unintelligible or offensive, are exchanged for others, or are explained by notes when it is desirable that they should be retained. These variations, if they may be so called, were as necessary to render this work generally useful, as the adoption of modern orthography. The utmost care has been taken that the meaning of the author should be strictly preserved, and the various pieces have been collated with the best and earliest editions, or with manuscript copies. This has been done, that the meaning of the author might be given as nearly as possible, not from the first editions being the most correct, as they often abound with errors, for which the hurried or careless manner in which they were for the most part passed through the press, will readily account. The present reprints, it is believed, will be found to present the most correct text of these writers that has hitherto appeared. More than half of the pieces included in this collection, have not been reprinted since the sixteenth century, and a considerable portion is now printed for the first time."

The Volumes included under the title of

The British Reformers may be arranged in the following order:

Volume 1. Wickliff to Bilney.
2. Tindal, Frith, and Barnes.
3. Edward VI., Parr, Balnaves, &c.
4. Latimer.
5. Hooper.
6. Bradford.
7. Ridley and Philpot.
8. Cranmer, Rogers, Careless, &c.
9. Knox.
10. Becon.
11. Jewell.
12. Fox, Bale and Coverdale.

By order of the Executive Committee.

Wm. M. ENGLES, Editor.

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SOME PARTICULARS

OF

THE LIFE OF THOMAS BECON.

Thomas Becon, or Beacon, was one of the most active of the English Reformers; and by his writings he contributed much to the diffusion of the truth. He was born in Suffolk about A. D. 1510, and was educated at Cambridge, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1530. The preaching of Latimer appears to have been very useful to him, and he became a zealous teacher of the gospel. On this account Becon was persecuted by the Romish clergy, and was apprehended by Bonner in 1544, when he was compelled to make a public recantation at Paul's Cross, and to burn his little treatises, which had attracted considerable notice. Some of them had been printed under the name of Theodore Basil,* and were prohibited in the proclamation against heretical books, in July, 1546.

Finding there was no safety for him in London or its vicinity, Becon travelled into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, where he remained in seclusion until the accession of Edward VI. During this interval "he educated children in good literature, and instilled into their minds the principles of christian doctrine." But the account of Becon's proceedings at that period is best given in his own words, as related in his tract, "The Jewel of Joy."

"What gentleness I found for my godly labours at the hands of some men in these parts ye know right well. Therefore when neither by speaking, nor by writing, I could do good, I thought it best not rashly to throw myself into the ravening paws of those greedy wolves, but for a certain space to absent

* Becon had two sons, whom he named Theodore and Basil, probably from his having assumed that appellation.

myself from their tyranny, according to the doctrine of the gospel.—Leaving mine own native country, I travelled into such strange places as were unknown to me, and I to them. And yet, I thank the Lord my God, who never leaveth his servants succourless, I, although an unprofitable servant, in that exile and banishment wanted no good thing. Let the voluptuous worldlings take thought for the belly, and be careful for this present life; I have learned in that my journey to cast my care upon the Lord my God, who abundantly feedeth so many as trust in him, and depend on his liberality and goodness. For one house I found twenty, and for one friend a hundred. I could wish nothing for the provision of this life, but I had it plenteously, God so caring for me, his unprofitable and wretched servant.

"After I had taken leave of my most sweet mother, and my other dear friends, I travelled into Derbyshire, and from thence into the Peak, whither I appointed my books and my clothes to be brought. Mine intent was, by exercising the office of a schoolmaster, to engraft Christ and the knowledge of him, in the breasts of those scholars whom God should appoint unto me to be taught.—I found them of very good wits and apt understandings.—Coming to a little village, called Alsop in the dale, I chanced upon a certain gentleman, called Alsop, lord of that village, a man not only ancient in years, but also ripe in the knowledge of Christ's doctrine. After we had saluted each other, and taken a sufficient repast, he showed me certain books, which he called his jewels and principal treasures.—To repeat them all by name I am not able, but of this I am sure, that there was the New Testament after the translation of the godly learned man, Miles Coverdale,* which seemed to be as well worn by the diligent reading thereof, as ever was any portass or mass book among the papists.—I remember he had many other godly books, as the Obedience of a Christian man, the Parable of the wicked Mammon, the Revelation of Antichrist, the Sum of Holy Scripture, the book of John Frith against Purgatory,† all the books published in the name of Theodore Basil, with divers other learned men's works. In these godly treatises this ancient gentleman, among the

* The first testament printed in English, about twenty years before the time here referred to.

† These were writings of Tindal and Frith.

mountains and rocks, occupied himself both diligently and virtuously.—But all the religion of the people consisted in hearing matins and masses, in superstitious worshipping of saints, in hiring soul carriers to sing trentals,* in pattering upon beads, and in such other popish pedlary. Yet the people where I have travelled, for the most part, are reasonable and quiet enough,† yea and very conformable to God's truth. If any be stubbornly obstinate, it is for want of knowledge, and because they have been seduced by blind guides.

"While I was in the Peak I learned that Robert Wysdom was in Staffordshire.‡ He was the same to me as Aristarchus was to Paul. Desiring greatly to see him, I bade my friends in the Peak farewell, and made haste towards him. When I came to him, I not only rejoiced to see him in health, but also gave God thanks that he was so well placed and provided for. I found him in the house of a certain faithful brother, called John Old, a man old in name, yet young in years, and yet ancient in true godliness and christian life. He was to us as Jason was to Paul and Silas. He received us joyfully into his house, and liberally, for the Lord's sake, ministered all good things unto our necessities. And as he began, so he continued, a right hearty friend, and dearly loving brother, so long as we remained in that country. Even as blessed Paul wished to Onesiphorus, (2 Tim. i.) so wish I to him, and with the same words pray for him, The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. After we had passed certain days in the house of that most loving brother refreshing ourselves with the comfort of the holy scriptures after so many grievous tempests, troublous storms, and painful labours, our dear brother Robert Wysdom was called away by letters, which was to us no small pain and grief.

* The Romish priests who repeated masses for thirty days, to deliver souls from purgatory.

† The midland counties were not disturbed by the tumults excited by the Romish priests, in Norfolk and in the west and north of England.

‡ Robert Wysdom, or Wisdom, was minister of St. Catherine's, in Lothbury, and a laborious preacher of the truth; he was compelled to recant, with Becon, in 1544. He wrote an exposition on the ten commandments, for which he was imprisoned in the Lollards' tower. Several of the psalms and hymns of the old version were written by him. On the accession of queen Mary, he escaped to the continent and became archdeacon of Ely in the reign of Elizabeth.

Notwithstanding, we submitted ourselves to the good pleasure of God, with this hope and comfort, that his return to his old familiars should be greatly to the advancement of God's glory, and to the quiet of his christian studies, whereof might spring hereafter no small advantage to the christian public weal. And so we, wishing one another the assistance of God's Spirit, repentance of our former life, strength of faith, and perseverance in all godliness to our last end, departed, yea, and that not without tears.—He was ever virtuously occupied, and suffered no hour to pass away without good fruit. He is a man in whom the fear of God reigneth unfeignedly.

"After his departure, according to my talent, I brought up youth in the knowledge of good literature, and instilled into their breasts the elements and principles of Christ's doctrine, teaching them to know their Lord and God, to believe in him, to fear and love him, and studiously to walk in his holy ways from their cradles, even to the yielding up of their last breath. I doubt not but Christ was so deeply graven in their hearts at that time, that he is not yet worn out, neither as I trust shall be so long as they live.—The people were not in all points commonly so superstitious as the people of the Peak, they savoured somewhat more of pure religion. This I think came to pass through certain English books that were among them, and through travellers to and from London.

"After I had spent a year and somewhat more in that country, in the virtuous education and bringing up of youth, I departed into Warwickshire, where, in like manner as before, I freely enjoyed the liberality of my sweet and dear friend, John Old, who, impelled by urgent causes, had removed into that country. There likewise I taught divers gentlemen's sons, who I trust, if they live, will be ornaments to the public weal of England, both for the preferment of true religion, and for the maintenance of justice.

"I travelled in Derbyshire, in the Peak, in Staffordshire, and in Leicestershire, yet Warwickshire was to me the most dear and pleasant. In Leicestershire—I pass over the other, I had acquaintance only with one learned man, a countryman of ours, called John Aylmer,* a master of arts of the university of

* Aylmer was active in promoting the Reformation. He was tutor in the family of the marquess of Dorset, who was afterwards duke of

Cambridge, a young man singularly well learned both in the Latin and Greek, teacher to the children of my lord marquis Dorset; but Warwickshire ministered unto me the acquaintance and friendship of many learned men.

"First comes to my remembrance master Latimer, a man worthy to be loved and reverenced by all true-hearted christian men, not only for the pureness of his life, which before the world hath always been innocent and blameless, but for the sincerity and goodness of his evangelical doctrine, which, since the beginning of his preaching, has in all points been so conformable to the teaching of Christ and his apostles, that the very adversaries of God's truth, with all their menacing words, and cruel imprisonments, could not withdraw him from it. But whatsoever he had once preached, he valiantly defended the same before the world, without fear of any mortal creature, although of ever so great power or high authority; wishing and minding rather to suffer, not only loss of worldly possessions, but also of life, than that the glory of God, or the truth of Christ's gospel, should in any point be obscured or defaced through him. His life was not dear unto him, so that he might fulfil his course with joy, and the office that he received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of God's favour. He might well say with the holy psalmist, 'I spake, O Lord, of thy testimonies and ordinances in the presence of kings, princes, and rulers, and I was not ashamed.'

"His noble fame and virtuous renown is well known, not only in this realm of England, but also in foreign countries, among both learned and unlearned. I have known him twenty years ago, in the university of Cambridge; to whom, next to God, I am most specially bound to give most hearty thanks for the knowledge, if I have any, of God and his most blessed word.

"I was sometime a poor scholar of Cambridge; very desirous to have the knowledge of good letters; and in the time of my being there this godly man preached many learned and christian sermons, both in Latin and English, at all of which for the most part I was present; and although at the time I was

Suffolk, the father of Lady Jane Grey. During the Marian persecution he took refuge on the continent, and was afterwards bishop of London. John Old was a teacher of youth, and vicar of Cobington, in Warwickshire. He was afterwards a prebendary of Hereford, and an exile for religion.

but a child of sixteen years old, yet I noted his doctrine as well as I could, partly reposing it in my memory, partly committing it to writing, as letters are the most faithful treasurers to the memory.

"I was present when, with manifest authorities of God's word, and invincible arguments, besides the allegations of doctors, he proved in his sermons that the holy scriptures ought to be read in the English tongue by all christian people, whether they were priests or laymen, as they are called; which divers drowsy dunces, with false flattering friars, could not abide, but openly in their unsavoury sermons resisted his godly purpose; even as Alexander the coppersmith and Elymas the sorcerer, with many others, resisted blessed Paul and his godly doctrine. Notwithstanding this, he, yea rather God in him, whose cause he handled, got the victory, and it came to pass according to his teaching. Neither was I absent when he inveighed against empty works, good intents, blind zeal, superstitious devotion, &c. such as the painting of tabernacles,* gilding of images, setting up of candles, running on pilgrimages, and such other idle inventions of men, whereby the glory of God was obscured, and the works of mercy less regarded. I remember also how he was wont to rebuke the beneficed men with the authority of God's word, for neglecting and not teaching their flock, and for being absent from their cures; they themselves being idle, and masting themselves† like hogs of Epicurus's flock; taking no thought though their poor parishioners miserably pine away, starve, perish, and die for hunger. Neither have I forgotten how he, at that time, condemned foolish, ungodly, and impossible vows to be fulfilled, wishing rather that liberty of marriage might be granted to them which have so vowed, than so to continue through single life in all kind of abominble uncleanness. Oh how vehement was he in rebuking all sins, namely, idolatry, false and idle swearing, covetousness, and licentious living! Again, how sweet and pleasant were his words in exhorting unto virtue! He spake nothing but it left as it were certain stings in the hearts of the hearers which moved them to consent to his doctrine. None, except they were stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart, went

* Repositories for the consecrated wafers.
† Swinishly filling themselves with acorns.

away from his sermons who were not led into a faithful repentance of their former lives, affected with high detestation of sin, and moved unto all godliness and virtue. I knew certain men who, by persuasion of their friends, went unto his sermons, swelling, blown full, and puffed up like unto Esop's frogs, with envy and malice against the preacher; but when they returned, the sermon being done, and were asked how they liked him and his doctrine, they answered with the priests and pharisees' servants, (John viii.) 'Never man spake like this man.'

"So sharp a two-edged sword is the word of God, it entereth through, even unto the dividing of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow. (Heb. iv.) So God watches over his word, so the Father of heaven causes his word not to return unto him void, but to do whatsoever his good pleasure is, and to take root and bring forth fruit in them that are before ordained unto everlasting life; in some a hundred fold, in some threescore, in some thirty fold. I will not further report his freedom of speech against buying and selling of benefices, against the promoting unto livings of spiritual ministers them which are unlearned and ignorant in the law of God, against popish pardons, against the reposing our hope in our own works or in other men's merits, against false religion, &c. Neither do I here relate how beneficial he was, according to his ability, to poor scholars and other needy people; so conformable was his life to his doctrine, so watered he with good deeds whatsoever he had planted with godly words. He so laboured earnestly both in word and deed to win and allure others unto the love of Christ's doctrine and his holy religion, that there is a common saying which remains unto this day, 'When master Stafford read, and master Latimer preached, then was Cambridge blessed.'

"That master George Stafford was a man whom the unthankful world was unworthy any longer to have.* I pass over

* George Stafford, or Stavert, was fellow of Pembroke-hall in Cambridge, a reader of divinity, who lectured on the scriptures. He was very attentive to his duties as a minister of the gospel. About 1528, there was one of great fame for his skill as a conjuror at Cambridge. This man fell sick of the plague. From compassion to his soul, Stafford ventured his own life by visiting him, and reasoned with him upon his wicked life and practices till he was brought to repentance, and destroyed his books. Thus Stafford endeavoured to save that man's soul, though he lost his own life by it,

the gifts of nature, and such goodly qualities as win unto them that have them the favour and commendation of men; wherewith he was plenteously endued, and this I unfeignedly say unto you: he was a man of a very perfect life, and, if I may so speak, of an angelic conversation, approvedly learned in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, and such a one as had, through his painful labours, obtained singular knowledge in the mysteries of God's most blessed word.

"By his industry, labour, pains, and diligence, he seemed of a dead man to make blessed Paul alive again; and putting away all unseemliness, set him forth in his native colours, so that now he is both seen, read, and heard with great pleasure by them that labour in the study of his most godly epistles. And as he beautified the letters of blessed Paul with his godly expositions, so likewise he learnedly set forth in his lectures, the native sense and true understanding of the four evangelists; restoring unto us in a lively manner the apostle's mind, and the mind of those holy writers, which so many years before had laid unknown and obscured through the darkness and mists of the pharisees and papists.

"He was a faithful and prudent servant, giving meat to the Lord's household in due time. He cast away profane and old wives' fables, and as the good servant of Jesus Christ, he exercised himself unto godliness. He was an example to the faithful in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. He gave his mind to reading, to exhorting, to doctrine. He studied to show himself unto God a laudable workman that needeth not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth justly. He was gentle unto every man, and with meekness informed them that resisted the truth, if God at any time would give them repentance for to know the truth, and to turn again from the snare of the devil. He fought a good fight, he fulfilled his course, he kept the faith: therefore is there laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give him in that day, and not to him only, but to all them that love His coming.

"With master Latimer, that true preacher of God's word, I was somewhat acquainted in Warwickshire, which was to me

for he got the infection, went home, and died. Fox relates this on the authority of bishops Ridley and Grindal.

no small comfort; not with him only, but with divers others, whereof some were men of worship, well inclined towards the holy scriptures; some were men very godly learned in the laws of the Most High, and professors of the same. So oft as I was in their company, methought I was clearly delivered from Egypt, and quietly placed in the glorious New Jerusalem, which is described in the revelation of blessed John: so sweet a thing is it to be in the company of godly learned men.

"While I was training up youth, and fashioning their minds unto true godliness in that country, behold, unexpected letters were sent to me from my most dear mother; in which she required me to return to my native country, and to be a staff of her old age, as my father-in-law was departed from this vale of misery. Considering my duty, and the honour which I owe unto her by the manifest commandment of God, I immediately after, not without the friendly consent of my well willers, departed from Warwickshire, and with all haste repaired home.

"In this my long absence I wrote divers treatises, but as yet three only are published. The Governance of Virtue, an Invective against Whoredom, and a Dialogue of Christ's Nativity, between the angel and the shepherds. The others shall be set forth, if the Lord will, hereafter at a convenient time. I translated out of Latin into English, divers little treatises,—The Shield of Salvation, The Solace of the Soul, The Commendation of Death, &c."*

This extract is long, but the reader will hardly fail to be interested with its contents, which present some valuable delineations of the state of England in the early days of the Reformation. At that time many of the inland secluded districts were scarcely accessible to travellers, and far less known to the inhabitants of the southern counties than some parts of the continent. We cannot help regretting that the author has not left us a full delineation of his life from his own pen. The particulars respecting himself and his contemporaries which such a

* In the Jewel of Joy, the foregoing particulars are communicated in a dialogue between Philemon, (Becon himself,) and some friends, to whom he relates what had befallen him. A part of Latimer's character is put into the mouth of one of the other speakers; but it is evident that Becon himself is describing his own personal intercourse with that venerable father. As the dialogue contains much extraneous matter, it seemed desirable to condense the above extract in Becon's own words.

narrative would have contained, would have made it one of the most valuable pieces of the reformers.

When Edward VI. came to the throne, the people of Canterbury were particularly opposed to the Reformation. This induced Cranmer to place in that city six preachers, distinguished for their piety and learning. Becon was one of them, and from the numerous sufferers for the truth among the inhabitants during the reign of queen Mary, their labours appear to have been made useful to many. Becon was also chaplain to the protector Somerset, and for some time an inmate in his family at Sheen. Of the death of this distinguished nobleman, and some other events of that period, Becon spoke thus in his epistle to the persecuted sufferers for the gospel in England: "We had divers signs long before, besides the godly admonitions of the faithful preachers, which plainly declared unto us an utter subversion of the true christian religion to be at hand, except it were prevented by speedy and hearty repentance. What shall I speak of that godly and mighty prince, Edward, duke of Somerset, who, in the time of his protectorship, so banished idolatry out of this our realm, and brought in again God's true religion, that it was wonder so mighty a matter should have been brought to pass in so short a time. Was not the ungentle handling of him, and the unrighteous thrusting him out of office, and afterwards the cruel murdering of him, a man, yea, a mirror of true innocency and christian patience, an evident token of God's anger against us? The sudden taking away of those most godly and virtuous youths, the duke of Suffolk and his brother, by the sweating sickness, was it not also a manifest token of God's heavy displeasure toward us? The death of those two most worthy and godly learned men, I speak of Paulus Fagius and Martin Bucer, was it not a sure prognostication of some great mishap concerning the christian religion to be at hand! But I may pass over many others and at the last come unto that which is most lamentable, and can never be remembered by any true English heart without large tears; I mean the death of our most godly prince and christian king, Edward the sixth; that true Josiah, that earnest destroyer of false religion, that fervent setter up of God's true honour, that most bounteous patron of the godly learned, that most worthy maintainer of good letters and virtue, and that

perfect and lively mirror of true nobility and sincere godliness —was not the taking away of him (alas for sorrow!) a sure sign and an evident token that some great evil hung over this realm of England?"

That Becon was an eminent preacher of the reformed doctrines appears from his having been committed to the Tower, with Bradford and Veron, within a fortnight after the accession of queen Mary. He was at that time rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, in the city of London. After a severe imprisonment of seven months, he was released, but was deprived of his living by the early proceedings of the queen against the married clergy; it is indeed most surprising that he should have been liberated, while many persons far less distinguished as preachers of the truth, were detained in prison under different pretences until popery was fully restored, when they were burned. These early proceedings, however, warned him of his danger, and after remaining in concealment for some time, he escaped to the continent, where he continued till the death of queen Mary—he was, to use Strype's expression, "a man mightily tossed about."

Becon's writings were included by name in the proclamation of Philip and Mary against the writings of the principal reformers, and many copies doubtless were destroyed. While upon the continent he was not idle, but wrote several of his tracts. In an epistle to the persecuted brethren in England, he directed them to their only refuge and deliverer; it was read in the private meetings of the protestants, and, with similar writings of other reformers, imparted edification and comfort to many.

In the preface written in 1563, Becon says, "The cross of Christ was laid upon the true christians of this realm not many years past, so that divers of our countrymen were most grievously persecuted, most cruelly apprehended, imprisoned, stocked, chained, manacled, brought forth, accused, condemned, and burnt to ashes. Divers were secretly famished, and murdered in prison, spoiled of all their goods, exiled and banished into strange countries.—I, at that time being partaker of exile and banishment, after long and that most miserable imprisonment, (to let pass my other afflictions, wherewith I was daily encumbered, besides the deceitful assaults of satan and his ministers, wherewith I was without ceasing troubled and disquieted, not only outwardly, but also inwardly,) oftentimes called unto

remembrance the most wretched and pitiful state of England, sometime flowing with the knowledge of God's word, as the sea with waters, but then wrapped full of blind ignorance and ignorant blindness, I considered with myself what I might do to help the miseries of my poor countrymen, especially such as were afflicted for the gospel's sake. Not knowing how otherwise to gratify them, I wrote an epistle and sent it to certain godly brethren, declaring in it the causes of all the miseries and calamities which were fallen upon England: again, how they might be redressed; and finally, what a merciful Lord our God is to all faithful penitent sinners that unfeignedly turn unto him. This epistle was not read of the brethren without fruit. I added a humble supplication unto God for the restoring of his holy word unto the church of England, wherein the devout christian complains his grief and sorrow unto the Lord for taking away the light of Christ's gospel, and most humbly acknowledging his fault and deserved punishment, most heartily wishes for the subversion of Antichrist's kingdom, and the restitution of Christ's most glorious kingdom to the realm of England."

At this period several of Becon's tracts relative to the Romish controversy were written; among them an epistle to the popish priests, showing the difference between the Lord's Supper and the mass, which he declares to be "a wicked idol."

When queen Elizabeth came to the throne, Becon returned to England, and again laboured zealously and successfully to promote the truth. In 1560, he was appointed to the rectory of Buckland, in Hertfordshire, and subsequently to that of Christ Church, Newgate, which he afterwards resigned; and in 1563, was appointed to the living of Dionis Backchurch, in London. Like many of the exiles and most excellent characters of that day, he desired that greater liberty as to uniformity should be permitted than was then allowed; and he was one of the large minority in the convocation, which supported a petition for greater freedom with respect to some rites and ceremonies.*

In January 1564—5, the clergy of London attended at Lambeth: they were required to subscribe to the recent ecclesiastical regulations, but several declined. Strype relates in his

* See Strype's Annals. Fifty-eight, including proxies, supported the petition, fifty-nine opposed it; the majority of the individuals present voted for it.

life of Grindal, "Many upon this were sequestered, and afterwards some deposed and deprived—Whittingham and Becon refused at first, but afterwards subscribed and were preferred." It does not clearly appear what preferment he obtained after this; but he was appointed to preach at Paul's cross in the following year, and the lord mayor petitioned archbishop Parker, requesting his grace to prevail upon Becon to preach one of the Spital Sermons. After this time he seems to have resided chiefly at Canterbury, where he held a prebend, and from whence he dated the preface to his collected works, and to his Postills, or plain sermons upon the gospels appointed to be read throughout the year. In that city he died about 1567.

Becon was one of the most laborious and useful writers and preachers among the British reformers. His publications exceed forty in number; some are of considerable length. The earliest was printed in 1541, and the latest in 1566. They embrace a much wider range of subjects than the works of any other writer of that day. Several of them are upon the Romish controversy, and manifest a thorough knowledge of the subject, but the greater part of them do not directly relate thereto. Their contents are also exceedingly scriptural; frequently for pages together, they exhibit a collection of passages from holy writ, illustrating in a very striking manner the subjects upon which the author is treating. All the reformers were "mighty in the scriptures," but Becon, especially, "abounded" therein.

Most of his publications were originally printed as separate tracts, and widely circulated in that form. Day, the printer, in 1549, applied for a license, which was granted, authorizing him to reprint all the writings of Becon, which evidently shows that the demand for them was considerable. A uniform and corrected edition of his works was printed in 1564 under his own superintendence, dedicated to the archbishops and bishops of the realm. They form three volumes in folio, and are now among the scarcest of the writings of the Elizabethan reformers. Few of them have been reprinted since that time; and the numerous and excellent writings of this pious and learned divine have been suffered to fall into unmerited oblivion, although highly commended by archbishop Parker and other writers.

The most complete list of Becon's works which can be ascertained, is as follows:—

1. News from Heaven. 2. The Christmas Banquet. 3. A Potation for Lent. 4. The pathway to Prayer. 5. A pleasant Nosegay. 6. The Policy of War. 7. David's Harp newly stringed; an exposition on Psalm cxv. 8. A New Year's Gift. 9. An Invective against Swearing. 10. The Governance of Virtue. 11. A new Catechism. 12. Preface to the book of Christian Matrimony. 13. The Jewel of Joy. 14. The Principles of the Christian Religion. 15. A Treatise of Fasting. 16. The Castle of Comfort. 17. The Solace of the Soul. 18. The Fortress of the Faithful. 19. The Christian Knight. 20. Homily against Whoredom. 21. The Flower of godly Prayers. 22. The Pomander of Prayer. 23. The Sick Man's Salve. 24. Dialogue between the Angel and the Shepherds. 25. An Invective against Whoredom. 26. A comfortable Epistle to the afflicted People of God. 27. A Supplication unto God for restoring of his holy Word. 28. The displaying of the Popish Mass. 29. Common-places of the Holy Scripture. 30. Comparison between the Lord's Supper and the Pope's Mass. 31. Proofs from the Fathers against the popish errors relative to the Sacrament. 32. The monstrous Merchandise of the Romish Bishops. 33. The Reliques of Rome. 34. The diversity between God's word and man's invention. 35. The Acts of Christ and antichrist. 36. Christ's Chronicle. 37. The Summary of the New Testament. 38. The Demands of the Holy Scripture. 39. The glorious Triumph of God's blessed Word. 40. The praise of Death. 41. Postills, or Sermons upon the Gospels for the Sundays and Holy Days throughout the year. There are a few other pieces ascribed to Becon, and some translations. He also assisted in the Bishop's Bible.

Only a small part of Becon's writings could be included in the present collection—a preference therefore has been given to those which are upon the subjects the least noticed by other reformers. Some omissions have been made where Becon was unnecessarily diffuse. To each of his tracts is prefixed a short preface or epistle, addressed to some individual of note at that period; a few of these have been retained.

Such is a brief sketch of this excellent reformer, who was "justly celebrated for his great learning, his frequent preaching, his manifold sermons and excellent writings"—WHEREBY HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.

THE

NEWS OUT OF HEAVEN,

BOTH PLEASANT AND JOYFUL, LATELY SET FORTH TO THE GREAT CONSOLATION AND COMFORT OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS.

BY THOMAS BECON.

A. D. 1541.

Oh, how beautiful are the feet of them which bring the glad tidings of peace, and show good and joyful news.—Rom. x.

Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy that shall come to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—Luke ii.

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own praise; but whosoever seeketh his praise that sent him, he is true and no unrighteousness in him.—John vii.

He that is of God, heareth the words of God.—John viii.

Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.—John xviii.

GABRIEL THE ANGEL AND AMBASSADOR OF GOD SPEAKETH.*

Wherefore are ye sad, O ye mortal men? Wherefore do ye walk as persons desolate, dismayed, and altogether comfortless? Wherefore do ye sigh, weep, sob, and take thought? Wherefore do ye wring your hands and tear your hair? Why, rather, do ye not rejoice? Why do ye not elevate and lift up your heads, walking pleasantly? Why do ye not look with smiling countenances? Why do ye not

* Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21. Luke i. 26; ii. 9.

put out of your hearts all anxious thought and care? Why do ye not so compose and set yourselves, that all the gestures of your body may frankly, and with a lusty courage, declare your joy, mirth, gladness, felicity, and pleasure? There is, believe me, not one cause of sadness, but of gladness many, yea and innumerable. For God is now no more an enemy unto you, but a dear friend. He is become, of a severe Judge, a merciful Saviour; of an austere and fierce Lord, a bounteous and gentle Father; of an extreme Revenger, a tender Forgiver. To be short, he is now become the very same unto you, that a most tender, most gentle, most loving, most bounteous, most kind, most beneficial, most liberal, and most benign father is to his own son, whom he most entirely loves, and tenderly enhales* above all the others. How therefore can ye be sad? How can ye do any otherwise than rejoice and be merry? seeing that all dolour, all sorrow, all care, all grief, all pain, all peril, all trouble, all danger, all disquietness, all hatred, all malice, all enmity, all malevolence, all ill will, all wrath, all displeasure, all desire of vengeance, and all that ever is contrary to your joy and pleasure, to your health and comfort, to your rest and tranquillity, is utterly extinguished; and so put away for ever and ever, that you who are of God's faithful congregation, obedient to his word, and ready to accomplish his most holy and divine will, shall never after this perish and fall out of favour, but have eternal life. And all this is come to pass through God's grand mercies, by the glorious nativity and most blessed birth of his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ; who this day is born of a pure virgin in Bethlehem, a city of David, through the miraculous and wonderful operation of the Holy Ghost; that he should be a Saviour, yea and an all-sufficient Saviour, to save his people, that is to say, so many as believe in him, from their sins, and from the danger of Satan, that they may be made inheritors of eternal glory.

These NEWS OUT OF HEAVEN, am I, Gabriel, the angel and ambassador of God, sent to declare unto you, that ye may unfeignedly rejoice, not in vain and worldly things, but first in the Lord God your Saviour, and afterwards in celestial and heavenly things, and evermore be thankful for them; walking worthy this inestimable benignity and unspeakable goodness of God the Father through Jesus

* Enhances, esteems.

Christ; that these singular benefits may not at any time seem to be showed to ungrateful and unthankful persons.

Methinks I see you now begin to rejoice and leap for joy, yea, and seriously to triumph, as persons full of frank courage at the hearing of these most pleasant and joyful news, which is to me certainly no common delight and small pleasure. But that ye may rejoice unfeignedly, and know that ye have an urgent and weighty cause to be glad, yea, and that with a continual mirth, and such a joy as ought to be immortal and never die; I will rehearse to you what a damnable state ye were in, before these most comfortable news were sent unto you from the most glorious and imperial seat of the most blessed Trinity; that you, perceiving your own miserable condition, may the more seriously rejoice in these sweet and delectable news.

God, in the beginning, as the Holy Scriptures testify, created man according to his own similitude, likeness, and image. That is to say, He endued him with immortality, wit,* reason, sapience,† justice,‡ free will, mercy, goodness, holiness, truth, and all perfection, and gave him empire and rule over all living creatures; placing him in a joyful paradise, a garden full of pleasure, that he should work in it and keep it; giving him also authority, power, and liberty to eat of every tree in the garden, save only of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If man did eat of that ever so soon, God told him before that he should die the death—that is, fall from the glorious state wherein then he was, and become mortal, wretched, sinful, miserable, servile, thrall,§ captive, and a very bond-slave to satan—hated of God, void of all goodness, bent to all mischief, the son of perdition, a firebrand of hell, a vessel of ire and wrath. All these things did God tell before unto Adam, that he might be prudent, wise, and circumspect, and the better arm himself with courageous valour to fight against the crafty and subtle assaults of his enemy.

Not long after, Satan, whom God before had thrown out of heaven for his proud disobedience, and disobedient pride, envying man that blessed and glorious state wherein he did remain; desiring also his perdition like his own, full craftily and like a wily serpent, attempted the woman as the more frail vessel, and ready to be subdued and overcome; so that at the last, through his subtle and

* Understanding. † Wisdom.
‡ Righteousness. § A bond servant.

crafty persuasions, she gave place to that wily serpent, the father of lying, and wickedly transgressed God's most holy commandment. For Satan told her plainly that there was no danger in eating of that fruit which was forbidden; neither should they die the death, though they so did; yea, rather their eyes should be opened, and they should be as gods, knowing good and evil. The woman, being enflamed with these honey-like and sweet enticements, seeing also that the tree was good to eat of, fair to the eye and pleasant to behold, took the fruit of it, did eat, and afterwards gave of it to her husband, who did eat in like manner; so that straightway both their eyes were opened, and they saw that they were naked; that is, they perceived right well that they were now become miserable, wretched, sinful, reduced to extreme calamity, and utterly fallen from the favour of God, for the transgression of his most blessed precept, which made them to be very much ashamed, and to hide themselves from the face of God. Oh miserable and pitiful change! O chance more perilous than can be expressed!

Now is a man become of immortal, mortal; of good, evil; of righteous, wicked; of wise, foolish; of holy, profane; of virtuous, ill-disposed; of free, bond; of merciful, cruel; of godly, devilish; of faithful, unfaithful; of spiritual, carnal; of true, false; of a vessel of mercy, the vessel of wrath; of the son of God, the son of the devil; of the heir of glory, the heir of damnation. Alas! when man was in honour, he perceived it not, and therefore is he now become even like unto a brute beast. He is altogether without the Spirit of God, he is all carnal and fleshly, therefore God's Spirit cannot abide in him, neither can man perceive those things that pertain to the Spirit of God; yea, and what is more to be lamented, not Adam alone is fallen into this damnable state, but also all his posterity. For through this his fault and wicked sin, all the earth, with the inhabitants thereof, are accursed. So that so many as come of this old Adam are damned, cursed, and thrown from the favour of God.

This one transgression of God's commandment hath made you all subject to the yoke and tyranny of Satan, and bound to everlasting damnation. Adam is your father, and you are his children; look therefore, in what case he is, in the very same are you. Adam is carnal, therefore are ye carnal; Adam is wicked, therefore are ye wicked; Adam

is the son of wrath, therefore are ye the sons of wrath; Adam is a liar and nothing but vanity, therefore are ye liars and nothing but vanity; Adam is captive and bond prisoner to Satan, sin, death, and hell, therefore are ye captives and bond-prisoners to Satan, sin, death, and hell. How can it be otherwise? That which is born of flesh is flesh. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of briers? So likewise every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth ill fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth ill fruit, neither a corrupt tree good fruit. Even as it is impossible for a sour crab-tree to bring forth savoury and sweet apples, so is it impossible for a sinful man, drowned and buried all in sin, I mean Adam, to beget any other than sinful, ungodly, and wicked children. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the ill treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is ill. Now Adam was evil, therefore whatsoever he brought forth must needs be evil. Yea, verily, by the sin of this one man Adam, evil was brought forth upon all men unto damnation. By the disobedience of him were ye all made sinners, and by nature the sons of wrath. For this one man's fault did sin enter into the world, and through sin, death; and so death came upon all men, insomuch as all ye have sinned. Ye were therefore begotten in sin, conceived in sin, and brought forth in sin. None of you all is pure, but every one is polluted with ungodliness. There is no difference; all have sinned, and want the glory of God. Ye are corrupt and become abominable in your studies, there is not one that doeth good, no not one. For the Lord hath looked from heaven upon the children of men, for to see if there were any that had understanding, or seeketh after God. But all are fallen from the true way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there is not one that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is like a wide-mouthed grave, they work deceit with their tongues, the poison of adders is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and wretchedness are in their ways; they know not the way of peace, neither is there any fear of God before their eyes.

These are the sinful, wicked, and damnable fruits which you, full of sin, wickedness, and damnation, bring forth. Your minds and thoughts also are prone to evil at all times.

Ye are not able once to think a good thought of yourselves. Who being born of woman, can appear pure and clean in the sight of God, before whom the stars are not pure? What is then to be thought of man, who is nothing but dust, and a very worm? Who is able to say, My heart is clean, and I am pure from sin? Ye have all sinned! Ye are all become unclean! All your righteousnesses are like a polluted cloth. Ye are fallen as a leaf, and your iniquities have carried you away, as the wind. If ye say that ye have no sin, ye deceive yourselves, and the truth is not in you. For your heart is wicked and inscrutable. Ye are unprofitable servants; yea, ye are hypocrites and wicked, and the mouths of you all have spoken foolishness. All of you have gone astray as sheep; every one has walked after his own fantasy. Ye all are of stubborn heart; ye love vanities and seek after lies. To be short, ye are foolish people, unwise children, and mad. To do mischief ye are wise enough, but to do good ye are very fools.

Here may ye see, as in a clear mirror, your deformity, your botches, your sores, your grievous wounds. Now may ye learn what ye are of yourselves; certainly, very flesh. That is to say, all that ever is naught, enemies to God, lovers of yourselves, captives to Satan, and firebrands of hell. What remedy, what shift will ye find? Whither will ye go? To what coast will ye turn you? How will ye escape the fierce wrath of God? Whither will ye go from his Spirit? Whither will ye flee from his face? If ye go up into heaven, he is there; if ye go down to hell, there is he ready also. If ye take your flight in the morning, and dwell in the furthest part of the sea; verily his hand will reach you there, yea, and his right hand shall catch you. What will ye do now? To flee profiteth nothing, to abide also bringeth damnation; thus you see that ye cannot escape by any means. To mitigate and assuage the divine ire and God's wrath ye are not able. Your sin hath made God angry with you. What have ye now, I pray you, wherewith ye may please him? Yourselves, as ye have heard heretofore, are the children of wrath, begotten in sin, conceived in sin, born in sin, carnal, wicked, and ungodly: your heart is corrupt, unclean, stinking, flowing with iniquity, arrogant, puffed up, proud, hating God, loving itself, full of hypocrisy and all evil. Your fruits are like unto yourselves, that is, detestable in the sight of God. What virtue then can there come out of such a corrupt and pol-

luted place? What pureness can there flow out of a puddle so filthy, so dirty, so unclean, so stinking, so unsavoury?

Thus ye see that ye have no way to pacify God's wrath, which ye have stirred up against yourselves through your own wickedness. What therefore remaineth, but only that you look for all cruel and grievous things? Hell's mouth is open and ready to swallow you up. The fire of hell which shall never be quenched, awaiteth you. Everlasting torments, intolerable punishments, perpetual turmoilings abide you. Ye are appointed to that place where weeping and gnashing of teeth are; where the fire is inextinguishable; where the worm of them that be there, never dies. What will ye do now, what shift will ye find? Will you fulfil the law, which God gave you by Moses, and so pacify his wrath? But this ye are not able to do; for of yourselves ye are nothing but flesh, and utterly without God. Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God. They that are fleshly, regard those things that pertain to the flesh; and the desire of the flesh is death. Yea, the desire of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be by any means. They that are in the flesh cannot please God; yea, they that live after the flesh shall die. He that hath not God's Spirit, pertaineth not to God. Now ye have not the Spirit of God, inasmuch as by Adam ye are all flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; how then will ye fulfil the law to appease God's wrath?

Moreover, the law is spiritual; that is, it requires not only politic and civil works,* but also the pure affections, and clean motions of the Spirit; and must be fulfilled, not with the external works only, but also with a frank and free heart, doing the works of the law not of constraint, and for fear of punishment, but of love. For perfect charity or love casteth out fear. But as the law is spiritual, so are ye carnal, that is, prone and ready to all naughtiness, buried in sin, and no less bond to Satan, than a bought slave is obstrict† and bound unto his master. Now is the law and you of contrary nature. When then shall ye agree? The law, I confess, is holy, and the precept is holy, righteous, and good; but ye are unholy, wicked, and evil. How will ye then accomplish the law, that ye may

* Outward actions. † Tied, under obligation.

pacify God's wrath, and deserve remission of your sins through your own merits and deserts? Can he that is dead erect and lift up himself? Can he resume and take again his armour? Can he recover new strength? Can flesh teach flesh no more to sin? Can the eagle command herself no more to fly? Can the dolphin cease to swim? Can the man of India change his skin, and the cat of the mountain her spots? Neither can ye of yourselves cease to be what ye are, nor yet work good, who so long have been exercised in evil. The law killeth, it giveth not life; the law worketh death, displeasure, and damnation; it purchases not grace, favour, mercy, remission of sins, peace and tranquillity of conscience. For cursed is every one that abideth not in all things that are written in the book of the law that he may do them. No man fulfilleth the law, therefore no man is justified by the law, but rather cursed and brought to damnation. For he that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one, is made guilty of them all. Moses gave you a law, and yet none of you all do fulfil it. Neither ye nor your fathers were ever able to bear the yoke of the law. Who ever entered into glory by the fulfilling of the law? While ye therefore seek to be justified by the law, ye are utterly fallen from that which ye sought. You, not knowing the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish your own righteousness, cannot be made subject to the righteousness of God.

The law was given you by Moses from God, not that you should seek to be made righteous by it, which is a thing impossible, but that it should declare to you the will of God; prove the obedience of your heart; keep you in an honest and godly manner of living; restrain you from wicked doing; repress idolatry, swearing, ungodliness, disobedience, theft, manslaughter, adultery, false witness, &c.; set before your eyes your abominable wickedness and sinful living, that you may learn to know yourselves, and make the more haste to approach unto God's mercy. For by the law cometh the knowledge of sin; ye would not have known sin but by the law; for ye had not known concupiscence except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." The law is a schoolmaster to teach you what ye ought to do; whose admonitions, warnings, and instructions, seeing ye follow not, nor obey as it teaches, and as ye ought, it rather condemns than saves you; it

rather kills than quickens you. For no flesh shall be justified by the works of the law, in the sight of God. Your labour therefore in this behalf is vain, seeing that ye seek God's favour, remission of sin, justification, salvation, and eternal glory by the works of the law only. Whither will ye now flee? Will ye pacify God's wrath by offering up the sacrifices of the ceremonial law? This also is in vain. For if the works of the moral law, I mean the Ten Commandments, bring no man to perfection, and are nothing less than able to appease the divine wrath, because of their uncleanness which do the commandments — yea rather, which do them not—how then can this be brought to pass by external and outward ceremonies, which are nothing but types, figures, clouds, and shadows of good things to come? Here therefore do ye nothing else, than, as the common proverb is, go about to make an Ethiopian white. For as touching your sacrifices, it is manifest by divers places of the Scriptures, that God hath no pleasure in them.

Wherefore, saith God, do ye bring unto me incense out of Seba, and sweet smelling calamus out of far countries? Your burnt offerings are not accepted, and your sacrifices have not pleased me. Again, Put your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. For I did not speak with your fathers, neither did I command them on that day when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, any thing at all of burnt offerings and sacrifices; but I commanded them this word, saying, Hear you my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; walk in every way that I have commanded you, that ye may prosper. But they would not once hear me, nor give attendance to me; but they followed their own pleasures, and walked in the wickedness of their malicious hearts, so that they fell wholly from me. To what purpose do ye offer unto me the multitude of your sacrifices, saith the Lord? I am full of them. The burnt offerings of your wethers, and the fat of your fatlings, and the blood of your calves, of your lambs and goats, I would not have. When ye come before my sight, who requireth these things of your hands? Offer, I pray you, no more sacrifice to me thus in vain. Your incense is abomination to me. Your sabbaths and holy days, by no means can I away with. He that offereth an ox, is like to him that killeth a man. He that slayeth a beast, is like unto him that braineth a dog. He

that offereth an oblation, is like unto him that offereth swine's blood.

Here you see that God hath no pleasure in these external sacrifices, but rather abhors them. Then you perceive full well that this is no way to deliver yourselves out of captivity, and to obtain the favour of God.

What will ye now do? Will ye invent new things of your own fancy, and offer them to God of a good intent, that by this means he may be the more merciful to you? This also is yet most vain. For if things prescribed and commanded of God himself, cannot obtain for you remission of your sins; what shall then your dreams, your fancies, your inventions, your good intentions, your godly zeal, do in this behalf? Verily ye are in a miserable case. For ye may not put any thing to the word of God, nor yet pluck ought from it. Ye must walk in the way that God hath appointed you, neither may ye decline on the right hand or on the left hand. Yea, ye may not do to your Lord God that which ye think best in your own eyes, but that only which he commands you. Here, therefore, is no evasion, nor way to escape the fierce plagues of God. Certainly the longer ye wrestle and entangle yourselves in this behalf, the worse ye are, so far as I can perceive; so unable are you of yourselves in any point to satisfy God's wrath, and to make him your friend. What refuge then can ye now invent? Yet is there nothing set before your eyes, but only desperation and eternal death; for ye have deserved no other; and the reward of sin, is death. Certainly the axe is laid at the root of the tree; and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. How now will ye escape from the wrath that is to come? Wo be unto them that sin and keep not my commandments, saith the Lord, surely I will not spare them. Sinners shall be turned into hell, yea, and all those people that forget God. For God shall rain snares upon sinners; fire and brimstone, storm and tempest shall be part of their cup. As smoke decayeth, so shall the wicked decay; and as wax melteth before the fire, so shall sinners perish before the face of God. The Most High hateth sinners, and he will be avenged of the wicked. The soul that has sinned, shall die. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, that he may root the remembrance of them out of the earth. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the

beginning. God is a consuming fire. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Woe be to you therefore, O ye ungodly men, who have forsaken the law of the Lord, that most high God! If that ye be born, in cursing shall ye be born; and if ye die, in cursing shall be your part. What will ye now do? Here ye see nothing but malediction, cursing, wrath, vengeance, destruction, perdition, damnation. Here perceive ye no way to escape the great displeasure of God, but only to precipitate and cast yourself headlong into hell-pit, to be burnt with the continual flames of that most terrible and grievous fire. Remedy is there none, all comfort is gone; besides sorrow and mourning, nothing here doth appear. Oh the miserable case wherein ye stand! Methinks I see you now again very sorrowful, much lamenting, wringing your hands, tearing your hair, cursing the time of your birth, having pleasure in nothing, walking as persons in distress, void of all consolation and comfort.

Verily, I have brought you into this case that your joy afterward should be the greater, and that you should have the more pleasant and joyful news, which I now bring to you out of heaven. For no man knows how precious a physician is, except first of all he feel himself diseased, and perceives that he has need of a physician if he intend to enjoy the benefit of health. They that are strong have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. Now, therefore, hear again your most pleasant news, that your sadness may be turned into joy, and that your joy may be full and perfect.

God perceiving in what miserable case Adam and all his posterity were set, through the breaking of his most blessed and holy commandment; again, that by the envy of Satan death had come over all the world; willing, of his own free mercy, without any of your merits or deserts, to show himself of no less power to save man, than the devil was to condemn him; said to Satan at that time, when Adam had offended, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and that selfsame seed shall tread down thy head. Oh most sweet and comfortable promise! Oh most heavenly word of grace! Here is the beginning of your joy and gladness! In Adam were ye all lost, but in this seed of a woman are ye all saved! But who is this seed? Not Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, nor David. Who then? Verily

the Son of God, even Jesus Christ, who, without the seed of man, by the wonderful operation of the Holy Ghost, did take flesh of the most pure virgin Mary, and is this day born into the world. He is this seed of a woman, that shall tread down the head of the serpent; that is to say, destroy his power, deliver you out of captivity, set you again at liberty, reconcile you to God the Father, purchase remission of your sins, obtain the Holy Ghost for you, and make you fellow-heirs with him of eternal glory. Satan, sin, death, and hell, with all their army, shall now no more prevail against you; for, by this seed of a woman, Jesus Christ your Lord, God hath given you the victory. So that now with triumphant hearts and rejoicing spirits, ye may say, O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory? For now is He born who shall slay death, and deliver you from the power of death; yea, from death shall he redeem you; and hell shall he swallow up, so that Satan shall have no more dominion over you.

Moreover, in this seed alone, Jesus Christ, shall all nations be blessed. In Adam ye all were cursed, but in Christ ye all are blessed. Adam brought to you wrath and displeasure, but Christ bringeth love and favour. Adam is the author of sin, death, and damnation, but Christ is the author of goodness, life, and salvation. Adam casts you down into hell, but Christ lifts you up to heaven. Adam makes you firebrands of hell, but Christ makes you inheritors of eternal glory. By the sin of Adam many were dead, but by the goodness of Christ grace hath come upon many. By the wickedness of Adam sin came upon all men unto damnation, but by the righteousness of Christ, salvation is come upon all men, unto justification of life. By the disobedience of Adam many were made sinners, but by the obedience of Christ many are made righteous. Thus you see that in Christ you are blessed, that is, pardoned of your sins, and received into favour.

Furthermore, this is he of whom Jacob did prophesy, that he should come, being looked for and desired of all nations. This is that prophet whom God promised Moses, that he would raise up among his brothers, and put his words in his mouth, so that whosoever will not hear him shall perish, and utterly be destroyed. This is he that was prefigured in the old law by so many types, ceremonies, and shadows. This is that king whose kingdom God promised unto David, to corroborate and establish for ever-

more. This is that everlasting priest after the order of Melchizedek. This is he whom so many kings and prophets have desired to see. And now is he come who so long has been desired. How blessed and happy therefore are ye who see this day! Ye may well rejoice and clap your hands for joy. For he is not born to be unto you a tyrant, a fierce lord, and cruel judge, or an extreme revenger; but a sweet Saviour, a gentle Lord, a bounteous favourer, a merciful forgiver. Which thing ye may well perceive by his name, for his name is Jesus, given unto him of God his Father, by the angel, which by true interpretation is a Saviour. For he it is that shall save his people from their sins. Mark, he shall save them, and not condemn them. If he had a rigorous name, ye might well have been afraid of him, but his name is full of sweetness, pleasure, delectation, and comfort. And because ye should not fear to come unto him, behold he is not born royally, after the manner of worldly princes, set out with gallant pomp; but humbly, meekly, and lowly. For he lieth simply in a manger, wrapped in mean clothes, when, notwithstanding, he is Lord over all things, both in heaven and in earth. But his kingdom is not of this world, for he has not so much as a place where he may lay his head. Thus is he become poor, that by his poverty ye should become rich. Oh how much are ye bound to this your new King and Saviour, who when he was in the form of God, yea, very God himself, took upon him the form of a servant, and became very man for your sake! If he had not done thus, certainly ye had been damned for ever and ever; for your sin was so heinous and great, that it could not otherwise be taken away, but only by him. By him, yea, by him alone, are all your sins put away. He it is, yea, he it is alone, that putteth away your iniquities for his own sake, and will remember them no more. A righteous God, and such a one as saveth, is there none but he alone. He is that Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. He is that Saviour who is come into the world to save sinners. He it is, in whose name, and in no other under heaven, men must be saved.

Moreover, divers grave, weighty, and serious causes are there, why it was convenient that this your Saviour should be born: First, that inasmuch as ye all are grievous sinners, and have broken all the commandments of God, he should

fulfil the law for you, delivering you from the curse of the law whereunto ye are bound, or else by no means could ye be saved. And this shall this child, who is now born, do for you, I mean, satisfy the law, before he ascend again unto his Father, and set you free from the malediction and curse of the law. For Christ is the perfect fulfilling of the law unto justification for every one that believeth. Christ shall redeem you from the curse of the law, while he is made accursed for your sake. For it is written, Cursed be every one that hangeth upon a tree. Oh what joyful tidings are these for you to hear: that Christ shall deliver you from the curse of the law, and restore you unto life, who before were dead!

Secondly, seeing that the world is without all knowledge of God, corrupt with idolatry, poisoned with their own imaginations, drowned with hypocrisy, and altogether set on wickedness, the head-priests, bishops, lawyers, scribes, and pharisees, corrupting the Holy Scriptures in such a manner with their pestilent glosses; it is necessary that this Christ, the wisdom of the Father, come down and redress these great absurdities, reducing and bringing the divine Scriptures again to their true sense, that men may forsake all idolatry, all ungodly doctrine, all wicked customs, and learn to know the true God. And surely as he is come from God to be a Master and Teacher, so will he undoubtedly teach godly things. For he that cometh from heaven is above all men. And what he hath seen and heard, that will he testify; for he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God giveth him not the Spirit in a measure. But the Spirit of God is plenteously upon him, because he hath anointed him, to preach glad tidings to the poor; he hath sent him, that he should heal the broken in heart, preach deliverance to prisoners, and sight to the blind, freely set at liberty them that are bruised, and declare that acceptable year of the Lord. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. All nations shall resort unto him: they shall say one to another, Come, let us go up to the mount of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he shall teach us his ways, that we may walk in his paths. The people that now walk in darkness, shall see a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, shall have the light shine upon them. Christ shall multiply the

people and increase their joy also. He shall make them to rejoice even as men that make merry in harvest; and as men that have gotten the victory when they divide the spoil; for he shall break the yoke of the people's burden. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the cat of the mountain shall lie with the goat. The calf, the lion, and the sheep shall dwell together, and the young child shall not once be afraid of them. The calf and the bear shall feed one with another, and their younglings shall take their rest together. And the lion like as the ox shall eat chaff. And the infant, so soon as it is weaned, shall lie playing upon the holes of adders; and the child that is weaned shall put his hand into a cockatrice's nest. They shall not hurt, nor shall they kill in all God's holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, even as though the water of the sea flowed over the earth. Oh what a singular pleasure is this for you, who hitherto by blind guides have been led blindly in all kinds of idolatry and wickedness, to the great danger and peril of your soul's health; for if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch—for you to have such a heavenly Teacher coming down from the bosom of God the Father, who cannot lie, but will purely and sincerely teach you all truth; that ye may undoubtedly know the true God, which is everlasting life, and consummate or perfect righteousness. Can any news be brought unto you more joyful than these? He truly is too much brutal that rejoices not at the hearing of them.

Thirdly, He shall not only, with all sincerity, inform you of the divine will of his celestial Father, but he shall also work many strange and wonderful miracles among you to confirm his doctrine, and to show that he is unfeignedly the true Messiah, who so many years before was promised to come. For he shall restore the sick to their health; the blind to their sight; the deaf to their hearing; the dumb to their speaking; the halt to their going; the mad to their whole mind; the possessed of the devil to their perfect state; the dead to their life; the sinful to grace and virtue. Then, as the prophet says, shall the eyes of the blind be made to see, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened. Then shall the halt skip as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be loosened. They shall walk as persons delivered and set at liberty of the Lord. They shall turn and come to Sion with praise, and everlasting gladness shall

be upon their heads. Joy and mirth shall they have, sorrow and mourning shall flee from them. Whose heart rejoices not to hear these most pleasant and comfortable news?

Fourthly, He shall watch, pray, and fast, exercising all kinds of beneficence and virtue; yea, and that not for himself shall he do these things, but for you, for your health, for your profit and salvation. All that ever he shall do, shall be done for your sake. His watching, fasting, praying, almsdeeds, and all that ever he doth shall be done for you. All his good deeds shall be yours; his righteousness, holiness, and godly life shall be yours. Christ's deeds must need be yours, for Christ himself is yours. This child is born for your sake, and this Son is given unto you. He is your NEW YEAR'S GIFT. He that hath not spared his own Son, but hath given him for you all, how is it possible but that, with this his Son, he must needs give you all things? Who shall now therefore charge any sin against you that are the elect and chosen people of God? It is God that justifieth and maketh you righteous, who then is he that can condemn you? Oh most blessed and joyful tidings!

Fifthly, when he hath full godly in this manner, both lived virtuously, and also preached purely, the divine will of his celestial Father, the bishops, the head-priests, the scribes and pharisees, who, through their obstinate blindness and causeless malice, shall ever hate him, lay in wait to entangle him in his sermons, calumniate his most godly doctrine, and obscure his most pure and irreprehensible name,—shall at the last grow into such and so great a malice and fury against Christ, that they shall never cease until they have cruelly slain him. For they shall report him to be a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, one that casteth out devils by the help of Beelzebub prince of the devils, a Samaritan, one possessed with a devil, one altogether set a madding, a seducer and deceiver of the people, a destroyer of God's temple, a heretic, a traitor, and one that forbids to pay tribute to Cæsar. They shall make his own disciple betray him through gifts and rewards. They shall bring in false witness against him to condemn him to death. They shall bring him before the temporal judges. They shall lay many things to his charge unjustly. They shall mock him, they shall rail on him, they shall spit on him, they shall buffet him, they shall scourge him, they shall put a

crown of thorns on his head, they shall nail him to a cross; they shall thrust him even to the heart with a spear; they shall, for very despite, hang him between two thieves and cruel murderers, as though he were the chief and principal. No kind of torment or villany can be invented, but the very same shall they exercise upon him. For from the sole of his foot to the top of his head shall there be no whole place in his most blessed body. Oh cruel fury and furious cruelty! All these things shall he suffer, not for his own, but for your sake, for your health and salvation; yea, and that willingly: he shall give his body to them that strike, and his cheeks to them that pluck them. His face shall he not turn away from them that rail and spit on him. Like as a sheep shall he be led to be slain, and like a lamb before the shearer shall he hold his peace, neither shall he once open his mouth. Thus, because it is his pleasure shall he offer himself upon the altar of the cross, and by his most precious blood pay your ransom. By this his glorious passion, shall he take upon him your infirmities and bear away your sins. By his most blessed wounds shall all your iniquities be put away. All your sins shall be laid on his back. His blood shall make you clean from all your sin. By his blood shall ye have remission of your sins. By the precious blood of this Christ, as of an immaculate and pure lamb, shall ye be redeemed from the tyranny of Satan. By the oblation of Christ shall ye be made free from all wickedness, delivered from the power of darkness, and carried into the glorious kingdom of God. For he is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

This is that Son of man, who is come to save that which was lost, and not to destroy the souls of men, but to save them. And all this shall come to pass by the oblation and offering of his own most precious and blessed body. For he shall be your bishop, not such an one as also shall have need to offer for his own sins, but for yours only; neither shall he be like the bishops of the old law, who offer daily for the sins of the people, such sacrifices as can never take away sin, nor yet make men perfect. But this your bishop shall be godly, innocent, faultless, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who shall not need, as the other bishops do daily, to offer sacrifices first for his own sins, and afterwards for the sins of the people. For he, being without all sin, shall once

for all offer himself. And this one sacrifice or oblation of his most blessed body, shall be able to save so many as believe in him even to the uttermost. Christ being the high bishop of good things to come, shall enter into the holy place by his own blood, and find everlasting redemption. He through the Holy Ghost shall offer himself immaculate to God, and purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. He, once for all, offering up himself, shall take away the sins of many. By the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ, done once for all, shall you be sanctified. With one oblation shall he make perfect for evermore them that are sanctified. Here you see of what inestimable price the sacrifice of Christ your bishop is. The virtue of it never ceases, but endures in perfect strength for ever and ever, that the sins of the faithful repentant may be forgiven at all times by it. Christ's blood shall not cry for vengeance as the blood of Abel did, but for mercy, grace, and favour. Yea, by Christ's blood shall all things both in heaven and earth be pacified, appeased, set at rest, and reconciled to God the Father abundantly. So that now ye shall be purged from all your sins by this one and all-sufficient oblation of Jesus Christ your bishop. For he alone shall tread down the wine-press, and take upon his back the great and importable* burden of all your sins. He, by his death shall slay death, and overcome Satan, sin, hell, desperation, and all that ever may be against you. So that now ye shall be made as clear as though ye had never offended. Ye shall now be so set at liberty, as though before ye had never been in captivity. And all this shall come to pass by the death alone of this young child now born, whose body shall be the only sacrifice for all your sins; unto which, as unto a holy anchor, ye must always run for aid, refuge, and succour, trusting assuredly that his death is your whole hope, your merit, your refuge, health, life, and resurrection. For your merit is the compassion and exceeding mercy of Christ your Lord; ye are not without merit so long as the Lord of mercies doth not fail. And if the merits of the Lord are many, then are ye plenteous in merits. The more able he is to save, the more safe and without danger are ye. Thus you see what a great occasion you have to rejoice in the death of the Lord Christ, your alone Saviour, whereby so many singular and great

* Unbearable, too heavy to be carried.

advantages shall befall you. God forbid, therefore, that ye should rejoice in anything at all, save only in the cross and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, but inasmuch as it is not sufficient that this your new King, Jesus Christ, do die for your sins, except he also rise again for your justification; therefore do I also declare unto you these most joyful and comfortable news, that after he is once dead and buried, he, by the power of his Deity, shall gloriously rise again the third day from death to life, for your justification, according to the Holy Scriptures. For God his Father shall make him alive after two days, and the third day he shall raise him up, and he shall live in his sight. As Jonas was in the belly of a whale three days and three nights, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. And as Jonas, by the power of God, came out of the whale's belly the third day, so in like manner shall this Christ, by the puissance of God his Father, rise again the third day from death to life. By this glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, shall ye get the victory over Satan, sin, death, hell, desperation, &c. By this glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, shall ye be made righteous in God the Father's sight. By this glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, shall heaven's gates be opened for you which so long have been sparred.* By this glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, shall ye also rise again, and enter into everlasting life. By this glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, shall God, of his exceeding mercy, beget you anew into everlasting hope, and an immortal heritage, which is kept for you in heaven. For Christ is the resurrection and life; he that believeth in him, although he be dead, yet shall he live, and every one that liveth and believeth in him, shall never die. Here you see in how glad and joyful a state ye shall be set by Christ's most glorious resurrection. What is here but that which moveth and stirreth up to joy and gladness? Too much brutal† is he who at the hearing of these most sweet and delectable news doth not seriously rejoice.

Furthermore, after this Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from death to life, and hath continued here upon the earth certain days, showing himself unfeignedly to have risen, unto his disciples and certain others, then shall he, by the wonderful power of his Godhead, ascend up into heaven,

* Closed, barred. † Ignorant, like a brute.

very God and very man, in the presence of his disciples, that they may be faithful witnesses hereof to others; and sit down ön the right hand of God his Father, as equal God, concerning his Deity, with his Father, in all virtue, puissance, strength, and power. By this his marvellous ascension shall he go and prepare places for you in the house of his eternal Father. For he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by him. By this his marvellous ascension shall he draw you all unto him.

By his marvellous ascension shall he give divers spiritual gifts unto you, through the sending of the Holy Ghost, that sweet Comforter, who shall lead you into all truth. Although he ascend unto his Father, yet will he not leave you comfortless. For by his divine Spirit, he will be with you even to the very consummation and end of the world. He will not leave and forsake you. For he is called Emmanuel, which is, by interpretation, God with us. For he is that God who will ever accompany you, so long as ye abide in his word. Yea, he will come and dwell with you; he will offer himself to you, even as a gentle and loving father doth to his most tender children. For this is his promise, "I will," saith he, "dwell among them, and be conversant among them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people, yea, I will be their Father, and they shall be my sons and daughters." Again, though Christ shall sit on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, yet shall he not be there idle, and utterly fallen from seeking your good. For he shall there continually pray and make intercession to God his Father for you. This man Christ Jesus is your only Mediator, so that if any of you doth sin, ye have him for your Advocate, even Jesus Christ the righteous; and he it is that obtaineth mercy for your sins. Whatsoever also ye ask of the Father in his name, he will surely give it you. What will ye desire more? Are not these comfortable and sweet news to hear; that you have this day so precious a jewel born among you, yea, and given you freely? Verily your joy ought to be so great, that it could not be expressed.

But let us hear more joyful tidings. When the time is once come, that this world shall have an end, then shall this your Lord and King, Jesus Christ, come full gloriously from the right hand of his Father, in his majesty, and before him shall be gathered all nations. For at the voice

of the archangel and trump of God, shall all people rise out of the earth, with their bodies, both faithful and unfaithful. They that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. All shall be present before the judging place of Christ. Every man shall receive according to his deeds. Then shall you who are his faithful people, receive for your corruptible body an incorruptible body; for your mortal body an immortal body, and even such a one as shall be like to his own glorious body. It hath not yet appeared what ye shall be; but know ye, that when he shall appear, ye shall be like unto him, for ye shall see him as he is. This day of judgment shall be to the wicked and unfaithful a day of wrath, a day of trouble and heaviness, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and mist. They shall walk as men being blind, because they have offended the Lord, and their blood shall be shed as the dust, and their bodies as dung-hills. Neither shall their silver and gold be able to deliver them in that day of the Lord's wrath. For to them it shall be said, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

But that day, to you, who are his faithful people, and obedient to his word, shall be a day of consolation, comfort, joy, and mirth, with all gladness. For to you it shall be said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." For ye shall be taken up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall ye ever be with the Lord in glory. But who is able to express what joy, what pleasure, what mirth, what gladness ye shall have in heaven? The eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him. Ye shall see him face to face, upon whom angels desire to look. With sorrow, care, thought, pain, or death, shall ye no more be entangled. God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. Your joy, your gladness, your mirth shall be perpetual. All the pleasure of this world compared to the least joy of heaven, is nothing. For this celestial city is of pure gold, like unto clear glass; and the foundations of the walls of this city are garnished with all manner of precious stones; the gates are of fine pearl; yea, the streets of this heavenly city are of pure gold. It hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to

lighten it; for the brightness of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light of it. In this city shall ye glister as the shining of heaven, and shall be as the stars, world without end. Ye shall be as the angels of God that are in heaven. Ye shall be pillars in the temple of God. Ye shall be clothed in white garments. Ye shall sit with Christ on his seat. Ye shall eat manna that is hid. Ye shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Ye shall have a white stone, and in that stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. Ye shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Ye shall receive the incorruptible crown of glory. Ye shall receive the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, in that day shall give to all those that love his coming. To conclude, you shall, according to his promise, receive everlasting life, in which ye shall live with God the Father, and this his Son Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour, with the Holy Ghost, one very God, world without end, to whom alone be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A BRIEF REHEARSAL OF ALL THOSE THINGS THAT GO BEFORE.

Thus have I declared unto you the most sweet, most comfortable, most pleasant, most joyful news out of heaven, at the commandment of the most high and puissant God. Ye see into how miserable a case ye are reduced and fallen by the sin of Adam, and how that by him ye are all damned and made the sons of wrath. Ye see that of yourselves, because of your imperfection, ye are not able to do any good thing that may satisfy the divine will and appease God's wrath. Ye see that the works of the law cannot make you free in the sight of God, neither are ye able of your own strength and free will, so purely, so spiritually to do them as the law requires, that you may obtain the remission of your sins, by doing of them. Ye see also that the sacrifices of the old law can never put away sin; and as for works of your own invention, they are most of all imperfect and most unapt to purchase grace and favour. Thus you see that of your ownselves, of your own policy, of your own righteousness, ye are not able to escape the danger of damnation, yea, rather damnation itself.

Therefore did I declare unto you the comfortable news out of heaven, showing you that God, not for works of righteousness which ye have done, which indeed are none, but of his own free and great mercy, hath vouchsafed to preserve and keep you from the danger of Satan, sin, death, and hell. Yea, and by this his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, who this day is born in the city of David, to be the Saviour of the world; so that for Jesus Christ's sake, God is well pleased with you.

Ye have heard that the law condemns you, inasmuch as ye are transgressors of it, and hath made you accursed. From this curse of the law shall Christ deliver you. Not from the law itself, that you should live ungodly, and after a remiss and dissolute manner, for such have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, but from the curse, servitude, bondage, and condemnation of the law. For Christ shall fulfil the whole law even to the uttermost. And his fulfilling shall be accepted before God the Father, for the fulfilling of so many as believe in him. And he, setting you at liberty from the curse of the law, shall give you a new heart, and put in you a new spirit; and he shall take away your stony heart, and give you a fleshy heart; that is, a soft and gentle heart, ready to incline to the accomplishment of God's will. He shall put his laws into your minds, and write them in your hearts, that you may ever after frankly and with a free spirit fulfil them.

Ye have heard how this Christ shall bring you out of darkness into the light of truth, by the sincere declaring of his Father's will. For he is the light of the world, and God hath given him to be a witness unto the people, a captain and a master among the heathen. And this his doctrine shall he confirm with such miracles as shall evidently show and prove that he is the true Messias which was promised to come. Again, ye have heard that all his good deeds are yours; for with him hath God the Father given you all things, so that he is your wisdom, your righteousness, your sanctification, and redemption.

Ye have heard also, that he shall offer himself for you to God the Father, an oblation and sweet-smelling sacrifice upon the altar of the cross; and that by this one oblation and sacrifice of his most blessed body, done once for all, all your sins shall he put away; ye shall be made perfect, and washed from all deformity, so clean by Christ's

blood, as though ye had never offended heretofore. Ye have heard again, that as Christ shall die for your sins, so shall he rise again for your justification, obtaining for you the victory over sin, death, and hell, by this his most glorious resurrection. Ye have heard that after he is once risen again, he shall remain here certain days, and then ascend corporeally into heaven, and sit down on the right hand of God the Father, sending down the Holy Ghost, who shall lead you into all truth. Ye have heard also, that Christ, sitting on the right hand of God the Father, shall not be idle, but shall provide and seek your health. He shall be your Mediator and Advocate. He shall make continual intercession for you. He shall plead your cause before God his Father. He shall advance your matter before the presence of God. If ye at any time excite or stir up God's wrath against you through your iniquity, he shall straightways appease it, and make God the Father still your loving Father, who else would be to you an extreme avenger. Ye have heard again that Christ, at the last day, shall come gloriously from the right hand of his Father to judge the quick and the dead, and how that after the judgment is once done, ye shall enter into glory with him, living for ever after in such joy, pleasure, and gladness, as cannot by any means either be expressed by tongue or conceived in heart.

All these benefits, pleasures, and profits shall ye have by this your new King and Saviour Jesus Christ, who this day is born in Bethlehem, a city of David. What more pleasant and thankworthy news could be brought to you than these? What could have set such a joy in your hearts, as the hearing of these news? Can anything like unto these befall you, so great, so welcome, so acceptable, so joyful? Verily if ye seriously consider the misery wherewith ye were obtruded* and overwhelmed before, ye shall easily perceive that ye have an earnest cause to rejoice. No prisoner, no captive, no bond-slave was ever in such great captivity and thraldom as ye were, before these news were brought to you. If a prisoner rejoices for his deliverance out of prison, which must needs have an end, if none otherwise, yet at the least by death, how great a cause then have you to rejoice for your deliverance, who were captives and prisoners to that horrible monster and pestiferous serpent, even Satan himself, yea, and that not for

* Oppressed.

certain years, but for ever, world without end! Neither was it your body alone that was in captivity and bondage, but your soul also. Both your body and soul were captive to him, so that if this your new King, Redeemer, and Saviour should not help you, it could none otherwise be but that you must needs have been damned, cast into hell fire, there to burn, to weep, to lament for ever and ever, remediless. But from this most grievous destruction shall this child Jesus Christ deliver you, and make you heirs of everlasting glory. What a cause have ye now to rejoice! Your joy cannot be expressed, your gladness is unmeasurable!

Therefore seeing ye shall receive of this your new King so many, so great, so inestimable benefits, look that ye be not unthankful. Receive this your Saviour with embracing arms; run unto him, if not with the feet of your body, yet with the feet of your mind. Aeknowledge him to be your only and all sufficient Saviour, and that there is none other name given unto men under heaven, wherein they must be saved, but only this name of Jesus Christ. Confess him to be the true Son of the living God, who hath now taken flesh of the most pure and clean virgin Mary for your sake. Confess him alone to be your peace, life, health, defence, goodness, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Your pastor, shepherd, bishop, and head. In all your troubles resort unto him as unto a strong bulwark, that he may ease you of your miserable burdens. Pour out your hearts before this Lord; know him to be your only Mediator and Advocate. Ask all things in his name. Doubt nothing of his great goodness and exceeding mercy towards you. Can a woman forget the child of her womb, and the son whom she hath borne? And though she doth forget him, yet God will not forget you. For behold he hath written you upon his hands, so that ye are ever in his sight. He will undoubtedly ease you of your burdens, be they ever so great. If ye thirst, he will give you of the well of the water of life freely. If ye hunger, he is that bread of life which came down from heaven; if any man eat of that bread, he shall live for ever. If ye be sick, he is a Physician ready to cure and heal all your diseases. If ye be bond and in servitude, he will make you free, and set you at liberty. If ye be dead in sin, he is the resurrection and life. If ye walk in darkness, he is the Light of the world. He that followeth

him walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life. If ye be poor, he is rich unto all them that call upon him. If ye be wicked, profane, and foolish, he is righteous, holy, and wise. If ye be oppressed with sin, death, or hell, he hath subdued them all. If ye fear the wrath of God the Father, he is your Mediator, Advocate, and Atonement-maker. If ye have condemned yourselves through sin, he is a Saviour, and will save his people from their sins. What would ye have more? Ye want nothing, but he will supply it for you abundantly, and to the uttermost. Fear not therefore to come to this your new King Jesus Christ. For the very cause of his coming is not to destroy, but to save the souls of men. Receive him therefore with joyful hearts. Forsake all idolatry and vain superstition. Believe in him alone; put your affiance and trust in none other but in him only.

And let not this your faith be dead, but quick, lively, and mighty in operation. Let it be such a faith as worketh by love. First, let your faith bring forth an earnest love toward God, and out of this love toward God, let such a love proceed towards your neighbour, that out of that love there may spring plenty of good works. Be like unto a good tree which bringeth forth her fruit in due time. Be no barren and unfruitful fig-tree, lest the malediction and curse of God fall on you. While ye have time, work good unto all men. For God hath not delivered you from the power of your enemies, and of all such as hate you, that you should still continue evil, or return to your own wickedness; but that ye, set at liberty and void of all fear, should serve him in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life. The law of the Spirit of life, through Jesus Christ, hath made you free from the law of sin and death. Notwithstanding, though ye be called unto liberty, yet let not your liberty be an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve ye one another. Be as free, not having the liberty for a cloak of wickedness, but even as the servants of God. For Christ hath not, of his own mere bounty, delivered you from the miserable servitude of Satan, that ye should run again to that your enemy, but that ye should serve him, who hath showed you such great kindness. Ye are now Christ's altogether, therefore must ye look what he will have you do. For if he be punished who disdained to fulfil the commandment

of a terrestrial and earthly prince, in what case are ye, if ye do either cast away or despise the commandment of a heavenly Governor. Certainly ye ought so to institute and order your life, that it should serve Christ your Captain, in such manner that Satan should have nothing to do with you, nor ye with him. For he that doeth sin is the servant of sin; therefore ought you to cast away all sin from you, and give your minds to purity and holiness of life, and ever study to maintain mutual love. For not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of God which is in heaven. He that pertaineth to Christ is a new creature; and they that belong unto him, have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof. Therefore if ye be soldiers of Christ, declare it in outward works. For it is a point of notable unshamefacedness to boast yourselves that ye pertain to Christ's army, and yet do nothing at all that he commandeth. He that saith that he dwelleth in Him, ought to walk as he hath walked. If ye say that ye have fellowship with Christ, and yet walk in darkness, ye lie and do not the truth; but if ye walk in light as he is light, then have ye fellowship together, and the blood of this your Saviour Jesus Christ, God's own Son, maketh you clean from all sin.

Wherefore if ye will enjoy these most pleasant news, which I have brought from heaven, and have now declared unto you, now forsake all wickedness, and embrace all godliness; reject all idolatry, and practise the true worshipping of God; cast away the works of the flesh, and put on the fruits of the Spirit; mortify old Adam, and become new men. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. To whom, with this your new King, and all-sufficient Saviour Jesus Christ, God's own Son, and the Holy Ghost, that most sweet Comforter, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

A

NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

PUBLISHED

BY THOMAS BECON.

A. D. 1542.

A young child is born for our sake, a Son is given unto us; upon his shoulder shall the kingdom lie, and he shall be called with his own name, the wondrous giver of counsel, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. He shall make no end to increase the kingdom and peace. And he shall sit upon the seat of David, and in his kingdom, to set up the same, to establish it with equity and righteousness from henceforth for evermore. This shall the jealousy of the Lord of hosts bring to pass.—Isaiah ix.

God hath not spared his own Son, but hath given him for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things also.—Romans viii.

To the right worshipful Master Thomas Royden, Esquire and Justice of the Peace, Thomas Becon wisheth long life, continual health, and prosperous felicity.

I CANNOT but highly praise the honest fashions, commendable usages, and friendly customs, which our ancestors and elders have used heretofore, unto the good and great example of their posterity, for the maintenance of all humanity and gentleness. Among many others, who will not account the custom of giving New Year's Gifts, to be so commendable and praiseworthy, that he may seem to be utterly estranged from all civility who does not observe it unto the uttermost of his power?* For

* In former times it was usual among all classes of persons to present New Year's Gifts. Several ancient records give a particular account of the presents made to the king and queen, and by them to the nobility, on those occasions, about the period when Becon wrote.

what else do we mean by giving mutual gifts in the beginning of a new year, than that we desire that all good, lucky, prosperous, and fortunate things may that year befall every one of us; and that one willeth, wisheth, and desireth well to another, is ready to do good one to another, and to help whatsoever lieth in his power? This undoubtedly was the meaning of them that first were the inventors of that most honest and friendly custom, and to this end has it been observed, kept, and mantained hitherto.

When I considered this but lately, and judged the custom to be both good and godly, and nothing more meet for the preservation and reconciliation of amity, I thought that forasmuch as I was not able according to my will to give such New Year's Gifts as commonly are sent from one to another, yet I would prepare something whereby I might show myself to wish well unto all men, and to bear an honest and friendly heart to my countrymen of England. I have therefore provided a New Year's Gift, not of corruptible gold or silver, but of the most sacred Scriptures, which, as David saith, are much more worthy to be desired than gold or precious stones, and are sweeter than the honey and honeycomb. In this my New Year's Gift I have opened many goodly and godly things. Among all others, I have declared what a precious treasure Christ is unto us, who was given us of God the Father for our New Year's Gift, and how many benefits we have received by him. I have also described the whole life of a Christian man, showing what we must do if we will enjoy such great benefits. Again, I have exhorted men to mortify their carnal affections and worldly lusts, and showed them how they must walk both towards themselves, their neighbours, and God, if they will have the fruition of the celestial inheritance.

To conclude, as I have showed that all salvation cometh by Christ, so have I proved that Christ is no Saviour but to them that repent, believe, lead a virtuous life, and are plenteous in doing good works. These things, with divers others not to be despised, shall be found in this my New Year's Gift, so that I doubt not but that it shall be no less profitable for the soul, than other worldly gifts shall be for the body. This my labour, employed herein after my so grievous and troublous sicknesses, I dedicate and send to your right worshipful mastership, for a New Year's Gift,

desiring you to accept it with no less good mind, than it is offered to your gentleness. If I shall perceive that this my little gift is acceptable unto you, it shall not only not repent me, but also cause me very much to rejoice for my travail in this behalf.

God, the Author of every year, vouchsafe to grant that this New Year, with many others, may ever begin unto you prosperously, proceed better, end with that which is best, and always be prosperous unto you so long as they last, so that you may alway enjoy continual health and prosperous felicity, according to the will of God, to whom be all honour and glory. Amen.

THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

A DIALOGUE.

Philemon, the giver of the New Year's Gift; Theophile, Eusebius, and Christopher, his friends.

Philemon. Christ, our Lord and Master, does not without cause compare and liken the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life to thorns, in his most holy gospel. For as thorns prick the flesh, and suffer not him to be in quiet that is grieved and hurt with them, so likewise the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world will not suffer, by any means, that man to enjoy tranquillity, rest, and peace who is turmoiled with them. Happy is he that appoints himself such kind of living, that he may be free from these great waves and rocks wherewith the life of mortal men is so miserably assailed and so often put in danger. The riches and pleasures of this world seem to the flesh to be things of much pleasantness and great delectation; but they are nothing else but enticing and flattering mermaids, which, singing songs pleasant to the ear, bring destruction to so many as are hearers of them. Blessed is he, therefore, who, after the example of Ulysses, can stop his ears with wax, and so pass by, being nothing moved with their vain and flattering enticements.

For as St. Paul saith, They that have a pleasure to wax rich, fall into temptations and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men into destruc-

tion and damnation. For covetousness is the root of all evil, which while some lusted after, they erred from the faith, and entangled themselves with many sorrows. Hereto pertains the saying of St. John, Love not the world, nor those things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, as the lust of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that fulfilleth the will of God abideth for ever.—I have not spoken these things without a cause. I thank my Lord God for his gift, I have been from my youth studious of the Holy Scripture, and very glad when I might either read it myself, and commune of it with my neighbours, or else hear others preach and talk of it, that I might be edified thereby; accounting that day but little fortunate unto me, that was transacted and passed over without some repast of God's word, seeing that man liveth not with bread alone, but with every word that cometh out of the mouth of God.

But lo! no man in this world is so happy, that he can have his mind satisfied in all points. For I desiring nothing more than to be in quiet, that I might freely give my mind to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and sometimes commune of them with my neighbours, have been so turmoiled and vexed with the cares and troubles of this world for the space of six or seven months, that I have scarcely had leisure once to think of the Holy Scripture. O Lord, what is it to live in this wretched world? Is it any other thing than daily more and more to be plucked away and estranged from thee, and to heap sin upon sin, and to provoke thine anger more fervently against us? But now seeing it has pleased God partly to deliver me out of the troublous waters of this ocean, and to bring me into a haven of some quietness, I intend to repair to my old studies, and to participate them with my neighbours, as I was wont to do heretofore. For I fear much lest that dissolution and slackness may also be found in them, which these certain months have not wanted in me; so prone and ready are we to fall from goodness unto evil, if we have not the spur of God's grace to prick us forward. Since I gave them a Nosegay,* I never spake unto them but good even and good morrow. Therefore have I now

* A tract written by Becon thus entitled.

sent for them, by my servant, to come unto me, that I may impart and give them some spiritual treasure for their New Year's Gift, this holy time of Christmas. Neighbours, even with one word welcome unto you all.

Th. Brother Philemon, right heartily we thank you.

Ph. Neighbours, yet once again welcome. I pray you come with me into my parlour, and take every man a chair and sit down quietly; for I intend to talk to you.

Ch. We are all set, speak what it shall please you.

Ph. Neighbours and brothers, it is not unknown to you, how desirous I have been ever since our first acquaintance, to seek no less your soul's health than mine own.

Eu. We are not ignorant of this, brother Philemon, and we all give you right hearty thanks for it.

Ph. I have done nothing but my duty, and I confess myself to be an unprofitable servant. Notwithstanding, neighbours, this grieves me very much, that I have been so negligent for some months in doing my duty towards you.

Th. No duty, brother Philemon; it comes of your mere goodness, whatsoever you do towards us. But it is not unknown unto us how greatly you have been disquieted with divers businesses for a great space.

Ph. You say truth; but now hear the cause of my sending for you. Twelve months past, if you remember, neighbours, at this time of the year, I made you "a Christmas Banquet," which, as I have since perceived, ye have right well digested. The Lent ensuing, I called you all to "a Potation," whereat I trust you tasted of that wine which makes the spirit joyful. The May following, at my instance, full gently ye resorted unto mine house, and, according to the season of the year, I gave you "a Nosegay."* All these were not for the body, but for the soul, yea, rather both for body and soul.

Eu. We remember all these things well, neither have we forgotten what you taught us in them.

Ph. It makes me rejoice greatly to hear these things of you; for now I perceive full well that ye are not forgetful hearers, but diligent fulfillers of such things as are taught you, and therefore are ye blessed in your act. Well, neighbours, my love towards you is nothing abated. I desire your furtherance in the knowledge of God's word even now, as much as I have done heretofore. In consideration

* These are the titles of other tracts previously written by Becon, and which are dialogues by the same speakers.

whereof, I intend at this present to give you "a New Year's Gift."

Th. Can any thing be more welcome to us than such a gift, coming from so dear a friend, and so in time and place? It is now a new year, and men use customably to give gifts to one another, whereby they declare their good will, and wish that all good and prosperous things may befall their friends all the whole year long.

Ch. Neighbour Philemon, the day passes away, let us therefore, I pray you, see our New Year's Gift; for there is nothing that can offer itself more welcome.

Ph. Your New Year's Gift is read in the church on Christmas-day in the morning, for the epistle, and it is written by St. Paul in the second chapter of his epistle to bishop Titus.

Here it is, "*The gift of God that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, and teacheth us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all unrighteousness, and to cleanse us to be a peculiar people unto himself, and even such as should be earnest followers of good works.*"

How like ye your New Year's Gift?

Ch. It is such a one as exceeds all praise. Would to God that such New Year's Gifts were given throughout all the world; then were it well with Christendom. For this New Year's Gift far excels all the treasures in the world, seem they ever so precious.

Ph. Now mark well, for in this your New Year's Gift lie more treasures hid than you are aware of; therefore will I declare it unto you, and note such things in it as I shall think most fit for your profit and edification. The beginning is this, "The gift of God that bringeth salvation unto all men hath appeared."

Ch. So far as I remember where you say "The gift of God," the common translations have "The grace of God."

Ph. I know that right well, but I thought it better for our purpose so to turn it as I have done; neither in so doing do I dissent any thing at all from the truth. For the Greek word "*charis*" doth not only mean "grace of favour," but also "a gift," yea, and that such a gift as is freely given without any deserts.

Th. Who is this gift, I pray you?

Ph. Verily Christ. Christ is our New Year's Gift. Christ is given us of God the Father. Christ is the gift of whom the prophet speaks on this manner; "A young child is born for our sake, and a son is given unto us." (Isa. ix.) Also St. Paul, "God hath not spared his own Son, but hath given him for us all; how is it then possible, but that he must give us all things with him." (Rom. viii.)

Eu. Is Christ freely given unto us?

Ph. Yea, verily, neighbour Eusebius, never was there anything so freely given unto you as Christ is.

Th. The goodness of God the Father then appeareth here great and immeasurable towards us.

Ph. It must be great and immeasurable, seeing that he loved us when we were sinners. (Rom. v.) Behold, saith St. John, what a love the Father hath given unto us, that we should be called the sons of God. And that ye may know that Christ is the free gift of God, given us without our deserts, call, I pray you, to remembrance, the fall of Adam, in whom all we have sinned and deserved the like damnation. What had he done to pacify the wrath of God, and to recover his favour, when God made him this most comfortable promise, I will set enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and that selfsame seed shall tread down thy head?

Ch. Forsooth, I think he had done very little.

Ph. You might have said, nothing at all, except you think this somewhat; when he had once offended, to put his head in a bush, and not to acknowledge his fault, nor once to dare to come in sight. What had Abraham deserved when God made him this promise of Christ, saying, In thy seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed? Verily, nothing at all, only he believed the promise of God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. He chose us, saith St. Paul, in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid, that we should be holy and faultless before him. Again, we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others were. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even then, when we were dead through sin, quickened us with Christ, (for by grace are ye saved,) and hath raised us up with him in heavenly things, through Christ Jesus; that in times to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by

grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God, and cometh not of works, lest any man should boast himself. Also in another place, After that the goodness and love that God our Saviour hath toward men did appear, not of the works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy hath he saved us, by the fountain of the new birth, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that we, being made righteous by his grace, should be heirs of eternal life according to hope. This is a saying not to be doubted of; Christ himself also saith, God loved the world so entirely, that he gave his only begotten Son, that every one that believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved by him.

From these Scriptures heretofore rehearsed, it is evident that Christ is freely given unto us of God the Father, yea, and that without our merits or deserts. For when we were utterly condemned, and knew not how to recover any part of our help, God the Father, of his own gracious goodness, gave us his Son Christ to be our Saviour. So that as the beginning of your New Year's Gift sets forth, Christ is unfeignedly the gift of God, freely given to us for our great comfort and salvation.

Ch. It cannot be expressed how much we are bound to God the Father for this his gift; seeing that he gave us not an angel or any other celestial creature, but his only begotten Son, even the highest and most precious treasure that he had.

Ph. Ye will say so, when ye have once heard what a treasure this your gift is unto you, and how many pleasures and advantages ye receive by him. It follows, "That bringeth salvation unto all men." Behold your New Year's Gift, that God the Father hath given you, bringeth salvation unto all men. It is no idle and unprofitable gift, but one commodious and necessary; for it worketh us health and salvation. The gifts of the world many times bring perdition, destruction, and damnation; but this gift of God bringeth life, health, joy, pleasure, salvation, and a whole sea of good things. It bringeth salvation, saith the Scripture. Note this word "bringeth," is as though it should be said,—when there was no hope of

health, but all things were yoked in the bond of desperation, sin bare rule, and Satan triumphed over mankind as his bond captives; then came the gift of God, which drove sin out of place, vanquished Satan, destroyed the powers of hell, brought salvation to man who looked only for damnation, yea, and that freely and without any deserts, even of mere grace and pure mercy. Oh the inestimable excellency of this gift, which both willingly and freely bringeth salvation to mankind! How can it be otherwise? Is not the name of this our gift, Jesus, given him of God the Father, and published by his angel and ambassador Gabriel? And what other thing, I pray you, meaneth "Jesus," than a Saviour? This our gift, Christ, is a Saviour; for he saveth his people from their sins. Fear ye not, saith the angel, for behold I show unto you a great joy, which shall come to all people. For this day is born unto you a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. Thus we see that Christ is a Saviour; therefore may he right well bring salvation, and save so many as believe in him.

Th. Is there no salvation to be looked for but only at the hand of Christ?

Ph. No, verily; You heard that the gift of God, which is Christ, bringeth salvation. It is Christ's office alone to save, and besides him there is no Saviour; neither in heaven nor in earth. Whosoever seeks salvation at the hand of any other but at Christ's alone, he not only deceives himself, but also robs Christ of his office, deprives him of his glory, blasphemes his blessed name, treads under foot his most precious blood; and utterly makes of none effect the whole mystery of Christ's incarnation.

Eu. It were pity that any should be of this mind.

Ph. You say truth. Notwithstanding there have been those who have sought health from others besides Christ; would to God there were none at this day. St. Paul feared not to say, If righteousness cometh by the law, then Christ died in vain. Again, Ye are gone quite from Christ, so many of you as will be made righteous by the law, and are fallen from grace.

Ch. Let us hear it proved by the Scriptures that there is no salvation, but by this gift of God, Christ alone.

Ph. The matter is more evident than to need any probation to the faithful; and as for them that are obstinately blind, all the Scriptures in the world can profit nothing at

all. Notwithstanding, to satisfy your godly desire, I will rehearse a few, yea, and those that shall seem most fit for the purpose.

Whence shall I take my beginning, but of the prophet Isaiah, whom Christ our Saviour had so often in his mouth? By him, Christ spake thus, I am, I am the Lord, and there is no Saviour besides me. Again, in that same chapter, I am, I am he which putteth away thine iniquities, yea, and that for mine own sake, and will remember them no more. Put me in remembrance; let us be judged together. Tell me if thou hast any thing whereby thou mayest be justified. Thy first father sinned, and thy prophets have trespassed against me. Also in another place, Am not I the Lord? Is there any other God besides me? A righteous God, and such a one as saveth, there is none but I alone. Turn unto me, and ye shall be safe, O all ye coasts of the earth, for I am God, and there is none other! Once again by the same prophet, (chap. lxiii.) he saith, I alone have trodden down the wine-press, and there was none at all that did help me. Are not all these Scriptures plain enough to declare that Christ is the Saviour, and that there is no salvation but by him only? There is no Saviour besides me, I alone put away thine iniquities, yea, and that for mine own sake, and will remember thy sins no more. A righteous God, and such a one as saveth, there is none but I alone. I alone have trodden down the wine-press. What can be said more? He that will not be persuaded with these words, and grant that all our salvation cometh by Christ alone, he is a very antichrist. Did not God the Father say that the seed of the woman should tread down the head of the serpent; that is to say, destroy Satan's power; deliver the faithful out of captivity, set them again at liberty; purchase remission of their sins; obtain the Holy Ghost for them; make them fellow-heirs with him of eternal glory? Who is this seed of the woman? Is it not Jesus Christ, the gift of God? Jesus Christ, therefore, alone is the Saviour; and he is that gift of God which bringeth salvation unto all men. For in him are all nations blessed, as God the Father said to Abraham.

But let us come unto the New Testament. We heard before that Christ is called Jesus, that is to say, a Saviour, and that he saveth his people from their sins. Whereof we may easily gather, that they who will be saved from their

sins by any other than by him alone, are none of his people. Christ is that well-beloved Son, for whose sake God the Father is well pleased, and at one with man. Therefore for Christ's sake and for none others doth God pardon, love, and favour us. Christ took upon him our sicknesses, and bare away our diseases. Therefore he it is that healeth, saveth and maketh whole. Christ crieth, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are laden, and I will refresh you. Therefore Christ eases, refreshes, and comforts the comfortless. Christ the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Therefore whatsoever is lost and saved again, is saved by Christ. Christ is that true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into this world. Therefore they that are not lightened by Christ, remain still in darkness. Christ gave to so many as received him, power to be made the sons of God, because they believed in his name. Therefore they that receive not him to be their Saviour, and believe that their sins are only put away by his name, are not the sons of God.

Christ is that Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Therefore there is none other sacrifice for sin, but Christ alone. No man goeth up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man, which is in heaven. Therefore so many as go up into heaven, go up only by Christ. He that believeth in the Son, hath everlasting life. But he that believeth not in the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him. Therefore they alone shall be saved, who with a strong faith believe Christ to be their Saviour. Every one, saith Christ, that drinketh of the water that I give him, shall never more thirst. Therefore Christ is a sufficient Saviour for so many as repent and believe. Christ is that living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eateth of that bread, he shall live for evermore. Therefore he that tasteth Christ aright, needeth none other Saviour to give him everlasting life. Christ is the good Shepherd which giveth his life for his sheep. Therefore so many as are saved, are saved by Christ's death. Christ is the resurrection and the life. Therefore by him we rise out of sin, and obtain life eternal. Christ is the way, truth, and life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by him. Therefore by Christ alone we ascend and go up into the presence of the Father. Without Christ we can do nothing. Therefore without him we cannot be saved. Christ is the vine; he that abideth in him, bringeth

forth much fruit. Therefore he that casts away Christ, and seeketh any other Saviour, is that tree which bringeth forth no fruit, and therefore shall he be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Therefore by Christ's death are we delivered from our sins, and by his resurrection justified and made righteous.

Being justified by faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore Christ it is who maketh the atonement between God the Father and us. By the sin of Adam alone, came condemnation on all men; even so by the righteousness of Christ alone, came the justification of life upon all men. Therefore as we were condemned by the sin of Adam alone, so are we saved, justified, and preserved unto everlasting life, by the righteousness of Christ alone. Everlasting life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore so many as obtain everlasting life, come to it by the free gift of God, yea, and that for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Christ is appointed of God to be our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Therefore by Christ we are made wise, righteous, holy, and the children of redemption. We are washed, we are sanctified, we are made righteous through the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Therefore by Christ's name and the Spirit of God we are made pure, holy, and righteous.

Christ who knew no sin, became sin for our sake; that is, a sacrifice for our sins. Therefore those sins that are put away, are put away by the sacrifice of Christ. Christ, when he was rich, became poor for our sake, that by his poverty he should make us rich. Therefore so many as are made rich, are enriched by Christ. If righteousness cometh by the law, then Christ died in vain. Therefore they that are made righteous, are made righteous by the death of Christ; and whosoever seeketh to be justified by any other means, than by the death of Christ, he goeth about to make Christ's death of none effect, and so he is a plain antichrist. By Christ we have redemption, and by his blood remission of sins. Therefore by Christ is our ransom paid, and by his blood are our sins forgiven us.

Christ is our peace. Therefore by him we have tranquillity, quietness, and rest in our consciences. By Christ have we free entrance unto the Father. Therefore so many as come unto the Father, come by Christ. Christ is gone

up on high, and hath led away captivity captive, and hath given gifts unto men. Therefore he it is that giveth remission of sins. Christ loved us, and gave himself for us to God, an offering and sweet-smelling sacrifice. Therefore for this sweet and odoriferous sacrifice of Christ, God the Father pardoneth our sins. Christ is the Head of the body of the congregation. Therefore he it is that saveth his members. It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell, and that by him all things should be reconciled unto himself, whether they be things upon earth or in heaven, that, through the blood of his cross, he might make peace, even through his own self. Therefore all they that are reconciled and set at one with God the Father, have obtained this by the blood of Christ.

This is a true saying, and by all means worthy that we should embrace it, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Therefore Christ it is that saveth sinners. There is one God, and one atonement-maker between God and men, even the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all men. Therefore as there is but one God, so is there but one atonement-maker, and this is Jesus Christ, by whom alone we are redeemed. We are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all. With one oblation hath Christ made them perfect for ever that are sanctified. Therefore so many as are made holy, have obtained that holiness only by that sacrifice of Christ, which he once for all offered on the altar of the cross, so consummate and perfect, that there remaineth none other sacrifice for sin. We are not redeemed from our vain conversation, which we received through the tradition of the fathers, with corruptible silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of an innocent and undefiled Lamb. Therefore by Christ's blood are we redeemed from all vain things wherewith before we were entangled. The blood of Jesus Christ maketh us clean from all sin. Therefore by Christ's blood are we made clean and purified from all our sins. If any man sinneth, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one, and he it is that obtaineth mercy for our sins, not for our sins only, but also for all the world's. Therefore so oft as we sin, by our advocate Christ are our sins put away. There is salvation in none other but in Christ. Neither is there any other name given unto men under heaven, wherein they must be saved, but only the name of

Christ Jesus. Therefore whosoever is saved, receiveth his salvation only by that name of Christ our Lord.

I may tarry no longer about this matter. All the prophets (saith St. Peter) bear witness of Christ, that through his name, every one that believeth in him, shall receive the remission of sins. If all the prophets bear witness of this, who dare be bold once to open his mouth to speak against it, except he be at defiance and open war with God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour? But with such I love not to meddle. Do ye not perceive now that this gift of God the Father, which he hath freely given you, I mean Christ, is the only Saviour, and that there is no health, salvation, comfort, and remission of sins to be looked for, but only at his hand?

Eu. We were indeed blind if we did not perceive it, you have made the matter so open with plain and evident Scriptures.

Ch. Alas! what blindness was there in the world, when some did put the hope of their salvation in stocks and stones, and old rotten bones, in gadding of pilgrimages, in gilding of images, in saints' reliques, and hallowed sticks, and popish pardons, in other men's works, in fancies invented of men, &c. Yea, there have not wanted those who sought salvation in a grey friar's cowl, trusting assuredly that if they were buried in that, they could by no means be damned.

Ph. All these were greatly deceived. But that ye may know there can be no Saviour but this gift of God, Christ alone, mark a few words that I shall now say unto you. First, He that shall be a Saviour, and save men from their sins, must be without all sin himself. Secondly, He must be both God and man. Thirdly, He must by his innocency deliver us from the curse of the law, yea, and fulfil the law for us, that the adversary may lay nothing against us. Fourthly, He must, by his might and power, vanquish and subdue all the power of Satan. Fifthly, He must slay death, that it may have no more power over the faithful. Sixthly, It must be in his power to give unto his people the Holy Ghost, to govern and keep them in a right way of living. To conclude, He must be such a one, that when they that believe in him do offend and provoke the heavenly Father unto anger, he may at all times be ready and able to make an atonement between God and the offenders. If ye can find any such as I have here des-

cribed, besides Christ, well; I will then also grant that he is a Saviour. Until that time I will say with all the prophets, apostles, and our teacher Paul, that this gift of God, Christ Jesus, is the only Saviour, that bringeth health,* and that there is no salvation to be gotten, but only through him.

It follows in your New Year's Gift, "To all men." Note that he saith not, to the wicked and damned spirits, which shall never recover their health and salvation, whatsoever the Origenists trifle in this behalf,† but "to all men," yea, and that those only who repent, believe, and lead a good life. For to wicked men and ungodly persons is Christ no Saviour, except they repent, believe, and amend. It is not to be passed over lightly, that the Scriptures speak generally and universally, without any exception, "to all men." Christ bringeth salvation to all men. These words prove manifestly, that as Christ is a Saviour, so are all men sinners; and again, that there is no man but receiveth salvation of Christ, if he be saved. Where are they now that will justify themselves, and sell their merits and good deeds to others? The Scripture saith, we are all sinners. There is no difference, saith St. Paul. All have sinned, and want the glory of God. "What is this," saith St. Augustin, "and want the glory of God, but the grace of God the Father by Jesus Christ, which is the glory of God the Father? And what meaneth this, they want or have need," saith he, "but that no man of himself, because he is born carnally, is able to recover the life lost, no, though he bring works of merit, except he be spiritually born anew by our Lord Jesus Christ, who came with the unmerited mercy of the Father, and of his own, and of the Holy Ghost, to save and seek that which was lost? What was lost? Verily mankind were lost through sin; in consideration whereof Christ, being without spot, even of his own free will giving himself to the death, and rising again, hath redeemed man from sin and death, even by the largeness of free grace." These are the words of St. Augustin, which show evidently what we are of ourselves, and what by Christ.

But let us hear more Scriptures. Every man is a liar, God alone is true. The Scripture hath concluded all

* Salvation.

† The followers of Origen, one of the fathers of the third century, who indulged in allegorical interpretations of Scripture, and abstruse refinements on the word of truth.

under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ, should be given to the faithful. God hath comprehended all men under incredulity and unfaithfulness, that he might have mercy upon all men. Here we see that all men were found sinners and unfaithful, and that they are saved only by the great mercies of God. All our righteousnesses are as a polluted cloth. We are conceived and born in sin. The imaginations and thoughts of man's heart are prone to evil, even from his young age. There is no man innocent before God, there is no man but that sinneth. There is not a righteous man on the earth that doeth good and sinneth not. Every one is a hypocrite and wicked, and the mouths of them all have spoken foolishness. All we have erred and gone astray like sheep, every one hath followed his own fancy. The heart of man is wicked and inscrutable. No man is pure from sin; no, the stars are not clean in his sight, how much more is man filthy and unclean, who is nothing but corruption, and a very worm in comparison of God! Who is able to say, My heart is clean, and I am pure from sin? No man is good but God alone. We are all unprofitable servants.

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any one that had understanding or sought after God: but all are swerved and clean gone out of the way, they are become altogether unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. They are corrupt and become abominable in their studies, their throat is like a wide-mouthed grave, they work deceit with their tongues, the poison of adders is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and weariness are in their ways, the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. How like ye these Scriptures? Do they not paint out man in his native colours? What have we of ourselves to rejoice and boast of?

Ch. We may perceive now right well that we are all wretched and miserable sinners.

Th. If God had not given us his Son Christ to be our Saviour, we had been in a damnable case.

Eu. We were so full of diseases, that if Christ had not been our Physician to heal our wounds with his most precious wounds, we had continued still diseased for evermore.

Ph. I am glad that ye have learned that all men are

sinners, and that therefore they have need of Christ, the gift of God, which bringeth salvation to all men. For this is the first point to know Christ aright. Neither can any man too much deject and cast down himself. For the more man humbles himself, the more he exalts the glorious majesty of God. But that ye may be without doubt in this matter, I will repeat certain texts unto you out of both the Testaments, which shall declare that we are all sinners. Adam, as ye know, transgressed the commandment of God in paradise, and by his transgression made us all bond-slaves to eternal damnation. Noah fell into the sin of drunkenness. Lot was not only drunken, but also committed the grievous sin of incest. Abraham denied his wife. Moses committed manslaughter. David committed both murder and adultery. Solomon was an idolater. Matthew was a toll-gatherer. The apostles did strive among themselves who should be highest and of greatest authority. Mary Magdalene was a grievous sinner. Peter denied and forsook Christ thrice. Paul persecuted the congregation of Christ. What should I make many words! So many as ever were clad with this flesh (Jesus Christ alone excepted, who was both God and man, and conceived and born by the operation of the Holy Ghost, of the most blessed and undefiled virgin Mary) were sinners, and so many as are in the same at this day, or shall be unto the world's end, are and shall be sinners, saved only by the free mercy of God through Jesus Christ. We all offend in many things, saith St. James. Here are none excepted. If we say, saith St. John, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Here St. John, who was so holy, virtuous, and dearly beloved of God, numbers himself among sinners, neither is he ashamed so to do, that all glory may be given to God, and the praise of our salvation to Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Eu. Does Christ bring salvation to all men?

Ph. To all men that repent, believe, and labour to lead a good life, were they ever so grievous sinners before. For Christ came not to call the righteous, that is, such as will justify themselves by their own good deeds and merits, but sinners unto repentance. He commanded his apostles after his resurrection to preach repentance and remission of sins, in his name unto all nations. For he is that Saviour that will have all men to be saved and to come unto

the knowledge of the truth. In the old law he was only known and preached to be the Saviour of the Jews. For God was known only in Jewry, and in Israel was his name great. He showed his word to Jacob, his righteousness and judgments to Israel. He did not so to every nation, neither did he open unto them his ordinances, but now he is a Saviour to all kinds of people. Christ, before his death, said to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach, Go not among the Gentiles nor Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But after his resurrection he said, Go throughout all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. For there is now no difference between the Jew and the Gentile; for one is Lord of all, rich enough for so many as call on him. For every one that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved. And this is what the prophet saith, The people that walked in darkness saw a great light, and to them who sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up and risen unto them. This is great consolation and comfort for us, that this gift of God, Christ, bringeth salvation to all men, as well Gentile as Jew, or else had we who were Gentiles been damned for ever and ever.

Th. Blessed be God for the riches of his grace, wherewith he hath freely called, justified, saved, and glorified us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ph. Well, neighbours, seeing that Christ is a Saviour and bringeth salvation to all men, so endeavour yourselves, that ye may be found worthy to be of that number which shall receive salvation and be saved. Repent ye of your old wicked living. Believe to have remission of all your sins through the name of Christ. Have no more to do with the world, the devil, and the flesh; but evermore garnish your life and conversation with the fruits of the Spirit, that ye may be fit vessels into whom God may pour his grace. Now mark what this gift of God hath done. It hath appeared, "The gift of God," saith the Scripture, "that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared." Christ hath appeared, saith your New Year's Gift. In the old law he appeared by figures, types, clouds, and shadows; as by manna, the rock, the paschal lamb, the brazen serpent, which all prefigured Christ; and by them did he appear to the faithful who believed and looked for his coming; but now he hath appeared personally, even in his own flesh. He that hath been so long looked for is now come, very

God and very man. He hath appeared. He hath been seen and heard. He hath preached. He hath wrought miracles. He hath suffered and died for us. He is risen again, and ascended up into heaven, where he sitteth now on the right hand of God his Father. All this was not fantastically done,* but truly and unfeignedly. He appeared very man, in the flesh which he received of the blessed virgin Mary, having his Godhead conjoined with his humanity, so that he was and is, very God, and very man.

Eu. There want not now-a-days, as I have heard, which plainly deny that Christ took any flesh of the virgin Mary, and as for that body that he had, he brought it down with him from heaven.

Ph. This is no new heresy, although it be lately renewed. But I will only rehearse unto you the words of God the Father, spoken to the serpent shortly after the fall of man, "I will set enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. And that seed shall tread down thy head." This seed no man that is faithful doubts to be Christ. Mark now that he calleth Christ the seed of a woman, he meaneth the most glorious virgin, Mary. If Christ be the seed of this woman Mary, then did he take his flesh and humanity of her. To Abraham, God the Father said, "In thy seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed." This seed is Christ, as St. Paul declareth to the Galatians, who being born of the virgin Mary, came of the seed of Abraham. Now if Christ had taken no flesh of Mary, how could he have come of the seed of Abraham? The prophet Isaiah also saith, "Behold a maiden shall conceive and bring forth a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." (Isa. vii.) Are not these words plain enough? But let us come to the New Testament. St. John in his gospel saith, The Word, meaning Christ, became flesh and dwelt among us; as though he should say, The Word, which is the Son of God, and the second person in the Trinity, took flesh of the virgin Mary, and became by that means very man for our sake, and lived here among us on the earth, and wrought such things as were the will of his heavenly Father. Mark that he saith, The Word became flesh, that is, the Son of God became very man. How came this to pass, that he was not only God, but also very man? Verily inasmuch as he took flesh of that most

* Merely in appearance, as the Manichees taught. See Augustine's Confessions, b. v.

blessed virgin, Mary, through the wonderful operation of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul also saith, Christ was begotten of the seed of David after the flesh. Here St. Paul confesses that Christ had flesh, and was very man, and that he took this flesh of the seed of David, which was Mary the most pure virgin. These words are plain enough for them that will see. In like manner he wrote to Timothy, Remember that Jesus Christ is risen again from death, of the seed of David. Behold how he still makes mention of the seed of David, because he would have us imprint the humanity of Christ in our breasts, which he received of the virgin Mary. For he did before see in the Spirit, that there should arise certain false prophets who should labour to wrest out of our hearts this necessary article of Christ's humanity. Christ abideth very God and very man whatsoever the wicked heretics babble in this behalf.

I will rehearse another text out of the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, and make an end of this matter; "He was tempted and made like to us in all things, sin alone excepted." (Heb. iv.) If he were like unto us in all things, sin alone excepted, then it follows that he had a body of flesh as we have, and that there was no difference, but that his most blessed body was without all sin, and our bodies are sinful. For he was born, wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger, fed, circumcised, embraced in arms, grew, was made strong in the spirit, profited in wisdom, and age, hungered, thirsted, wept, was weary, rejoiced, was moved with anger and indignation, sorrowed, was heavy, sad, and at the last suffered the most spiteful death of the cross. Are not these very signs and manifest tokens of man? Could he have done these things, if he had either a fantastical body, or else a body from heaven? Nay verily, for what fantastical or heavenly thing hungers, thirsts, weeps, sleeps, rejoices, &c.; all which Christ did? (Luke xxiii.) A little before his passion, was he not in such an agony, that his sweat was like drops of blood trickling down to the ground? Did he not so greatly fear death, that he desired his Father to withdraw the cup of his sufferings from him? Are not all these evident tokens of a very man, seeing his flesh so greatly feared death? Seeing then that he was very man, whence had he this body but of the most holy virgin, Mary, through the marvellous operation of God's Spirit? Con-

founded therefore be Manichæus who denied the humanity of Christ. Confounded be Valentius who affirmed that Christ brought his body with him from heaven, and took no flesh of the virgin Mary. Confounded be so many as hold and maintain this wicked doctrine contrary to God's truth.* For God was showed in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the earth, and received up into glory.

Thus you see, neighbours, that Christ, the gift of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared; yea, and that in the flesh which he received of the most blessed and pure virgin, Mary. (1 John iii.) He appeared, saith St. John, that he might take away our sins, and yet was there no sin in him. Again, For this cause appeared the Son of God, that he might destroy the works of the devil. But of all these things ye have heard abundantly before; therefore I will go onward with your New Year's Gift. It follows, "And teacheth us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." We heard before that Christ, being born of the virgin Mary, brought health and salvation to all men, both Jew and Gentile. Here again St. Paul teaches what other pleasure he hath done us. He hath not only brought salvation to us, and by that means delivered us out of the miserable state wherewith we were detained before; but he hath also taught us what we should do, that, through our own fault, we lose not again the dignity which we have gotten through the free mercy of God. And in this behalf also are we much bound to this our gift. For what doth it profit to have a treasure gotten us, and to lose it again straightways? Are we not much bound to them who both give us treasures, and show us also how we may safely keep them to our great pleasure and comfort? How much then are we indebted to our Saviour Christ, who hath not only given us the treasure of salvation, which of all treasures is most excellent, but also taught us how we shall behave ourselves, that we lose it not hereafter. But let us hear what he hath taught us.

His doctrine is this, "That we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." We therein hear none unwritten

* Some of the German fanatics had revived this ancient heresy of the Manichees, and it was maintained by their disciples in England. A part of Becon's remarks upon this error, and also respecting the virgin Mary, are omitted; but enough is retained to show correctly his views upon this subject, which is an important one.

verities,* nor the fancies of men, nor yet old wives' fables and such things as edify not, but those things that have been taught of Moses and the prophets many years before Christ's coming, as we may see in the Holy Scriptures; therefore may they not be rejected and cast away. The ancient heathens hearkened not more to the oracles and answers of Apollo, than we ought to hearken and give ear to the doctrine of this gift of God, Christ our Saviour. For he is that prophet whom God promised he would raise up, and put his words into his mouth, so that whosoever will not hear him, God will punish him. He is a Master sent from God. He hath the words of everlasting life. He is the Light of the world; whosoever followeth him, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the God that cannot lie. He is faithful in all his words, and holy in all his works. We are commanded of God the Father to hear him. The Spirit of God is upon him; he is sent to preach joyful tidings to the poor, that he might heal the broken in heart, preach deliverance to the prisoners, and sight to the blind. He is that good Shepherd whose voice his sheep hear. And every one that is of the truth, heareth his voice. He is that Lord God who teaches us profitable things, and governs us in the way wherein we ought to walk. Seeing then that he is a Lord of such and so great authority, excellency, and puissance; seeing also that he teaches nothing but truth; again, seeing he hath done so much for us, and desireth nothing more than our health and salvation; we were not only too ungrateful and unkind towards him, but also very enemies unto ourselves, if we should not with all diligence apply ourselves both to hear him, and also to follow and accomplish such things as he teaches us.

Let us therefore hear what he wills us to do. "And teacheth us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." Whereas our English translation has, "teacheth," the Greek word signifies not only to teach, but so to instruct, inform, fashion, and teach, as schoolmasters are wont to do their children, whom they found and received rude, gross, ignorant, and without all good knowledge both of learning and manners. Even such did our schoolmaster and teacher Christ find us; all gross, all rude, all barbarous, all blind, all ignorant, all unlearned, all unmannered, and wholly out of fashion. How could it

* Traditions.

be otherwise? We were darkness. We walked in the vanity of our mind; blinded in our understanding; being strangers from the life which is in God, through the ignorance that was in us, and the blindness of our hearts, so that we gave over ourselves unto wantonness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. For Satan, the god of this world, had blinded our minds, that we should not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine unto us. But yet for all this our rudeness, ignorance, and blindness, Christ, that heavenly teacher, does not disdain us. He is contented to receive us into his school, and to become our schoolmaster, so that we will leave our wickedness, and be content to be reformed. Oh what a gentle point is this of our Saviour Jesus Christ, not to disdain us for all our rudeness and ignorance, but joyfully to accept us if we will follow the ways of his school! The common saying is, An honest master loveth to have honest servants. Now who is more honest, pure, godly, innocent, and faultless, than this Master, Christ? It becometh then his servants to practise and follow his manners so nigh as they can. Therefore, the first lesson that his scholars learn in his school is to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. They that intend not to do this are not fit scholars for such a schoolmaster, though they brag ever so much of his name, and call themselves Christians. (Matt. vii.) For not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, (saith Christ,) shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. And I pray you remark how the Scripture speaks, That we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. As though it should say, Although in times past we have both followed and maintained ungodliness, idolatry, false worshippings of God, superstition, confidence in our own selves and works, and have lived after the lusts of the world and the flesh; yet now, forasmuch as we are come into a new school, and have another schoolmaster and teacher, who teaches his scholars nothing but virtue, godliness, and all that is contrary to vice, it becomes us to deny, forsake, yea, and utterly to forswear all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and whatsoever is contrary to the teaching of this our new schoolmaster, and never to have to do with them hereafter; but studiously, and with all application of mind, to follow the doctrine of this our teacher.

Th. What is it to deny ungodliness?

Ph. To deny ungodliness is utterly to forsake and to cast away all things that should obscure, deface, or in any point hinder the honour and glory of God. For whosoever will be Christ's scholar, he must first seek the glory of God above all things, as it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Eu. Who are they that hinder the glory of God?

Ph. Ask ye who, neighbour Eusebius, when the world is altogether set on wickedness? as St. John saith; They love the glory of men, more than the glory of God; as Christ saith. All seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's, saith St. Paul. What a sort of idolaters are there in the world, who steal the honour from God, and give it to creatures. What a number are fallen from Christ, some putting their trust in popish pardons, some in the merits of others, some in their own works, some in the observance of men's traditions, &c. What a company is there that love worldly things more than God! How does the covetous man embrace and love his riches! So that it was not without a cause said by Christ, It is more easy for a cable rope to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. How does the glutton make much of his belly, and cram it with all kind of dainties! How does the proud person garnish himself, and delight in precious ornaments! How does the ireful man set aside all charity and fear of God, and seek to be revenged! Again, What a swarm of wicked persons are there, who dishonour the name of our God by unlawful and abominable oaths! What thing in earth do they leave unsworn by! Yea, what part of the most glorious body of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whereby we receive redemption and salvation, do they leave untouched with their very detestable oaths! Why do not these wretches call this precept of God to remembrance, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. The wise man also saith, The man that uses much swearing shall be filled with wickedness, and the plague, that is, the vengeance of God, shall not go away from his house. Furthermore, what a flock is there that hate God's word, and so many as labour to promote and set it forth, calling them heretics and fellows of the new learning! How little pleasure have these swinish worldlings

and voluptuous belly-gods, either to read the Scriptures themselves or to hear others! Yea, I would there were not some, who neither will read the most Holy Bible themselves, nor yet willingly suffer others to read. Against all such Christ thunders in the gospel, saying, Wo be to you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, which have taken away the key of knowledge, and barred the kingdom of heaven before men. Ye yourselves do not enter, nor yet suffer them that come to enter. Do not all these, think you, as I may let pass many others, greatly dishonour God and obscure his glory? These are no fit scholars for Christ's school, except they repent and amend. Therefore, as I said unto you before, whosoever will be Christ's scholar, he must first seek the glory of God above all things. He must love God above all things, either in heaven or in earth; believe him to be his only Saviour; and ask and look for all good things of him alone. He must honour his name, and seek the glory thereof in all things that he doeth. Yea, for the glory of this his God, he must be contented, not only to bestow his goods, but his very life also, if the honour of God so requires. He must love the word of God as the only treasure of his soul, study in it day and night, talk of it with others, exhort his Christian brothers unto the reading of it, rejoice when he sees that men have a pleasure in it, and encourage them so to continue, and to follow that which they read. They that do this, deny ungodliness, and unfeignedly seek the honour and glory of God.

Ch. I beseech God, that we all may have grace thus to do.

Ph. Forasmuch as we walk not only before God, but also before men, therefore doth your New Year's Gift, I mean Christ your schoolmaster, not only teach you to deny ungodliness, but also worldly lusts, as St. Paul saith, writing to the Colossians, Mortify your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, unnatural lusts, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is worshipping of idols; for which things the wrath of God cometh on the children of unbelief; in which ye walked once when ye lived in them. But now ye also put away from you all these, wrath, fierceness, maliciousness, cursed speaking, filthy talk out of your mouths. Lie not one to another, after ye have put off the old man, with his works, and put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that made him. Of these words may

ye learn what it is to deny worldly lusts. Verily to mortify all carnal affections, which strive against the Spirit. For the flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit contrary to the flesh. But they that pertain unto Christ, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye mortify the deeds of the body in the Spirit, ye shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Here may ye see what pureness both of body and mind God requires of us, seeing we may not so much as once nourish a worldly and carnal lust in our hearts. How much less then is it lawful for us to accomplish them in deed, and to bring them forth in external act. Hereto pertaineth the commandment, Thou shalt not covet or lust. Our Schoolmaster also, in the sermon that he made in the mountain, saith, Whosoever looketh on another man's wife, lusting after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart. It is not without a cause that Christ teaches us to deny worldly and fleshly lusts. For if the heart be not restrained from evil concupiscence and kept clean, it is not possible that we can either speak or do any thing at all that should be good or godly. For of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth what is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth what is evil. Every tree is known by its fruit. Therefore must we above all things watch that no evil lust creep into our hearts, either through the enticement of the flesh, or the flattering of the world, or yet the crafty suggestion of Satan. Be sober, saith St. Peter, and watch; for your adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. If the heart be once corrupt with worldly lusts, then goeth all to havoc; as St. James saith, after that lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Blessed is that man who can keep his heart free from worldly lusts and unlawful desires; for he is a fit scholar to be in Christ's school, yea, it is an evident token that he hath learned with Christ already, and hath well profited in godly knowledge. And that ye may do this, set ever before the eyes of your mind this saying of St. John, Love not the world, neither those things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in

him. For all that is in the world, as the concupiscence of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for evermore.

Eu. Is it lawful for us to covet and desire such things of the world as are necessary for our living?

Ph. To desire to have meat, drink, and clothes, without which ye cannot live in the world, is lawful. Solomon* and Jacob prayed for them unto God. Christ also, in the "Pater noster," taught us to pray, Give us this day our daily bread. St. Paul also saith, If any man doth not provide for his household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Therefore it is lawful both to desire and to pray, and to make provision for them, so that it be done in faith, and of a single heart. For all the creatures of God are good, as the Scripture saith, God beheld all things that he had made, and they were very good. All things are pure to them that are pure. Nothing is to be cast away that is received with thanksgiving. To desire these things, I say, yea, and to have the use and possession of them, ye are not forbidden. But to lust and desire worldly riches with a covetous and insatiable mind, that ye may join house to house, land to land, and farm to farm; to desire to be revenged, when all vengeance pertaineth to God, as he saith, Vengeance is mine, and I will reward; to lust after another man's wife, maid or servant; to desire and lust after dainty meats, that the flesh may be more prone and ready to sin; thus to do ye are forbidden, and if ye do it, ye are cursed of God, as the Psalmist saith, Cursed be they that turn away from thy commandments. Thus ye perceive, I trust, what is meant by the denying of worldly lusts. And see that ye be not forgetful hearers, but diligent accomplishers of such things as ye know, lest your knowledge turn to your greater damnation. Mortify your carnal affections and worldly lusts; suffer none of them to creep into your hearts. Call to God for help without ceasing, that ye may be able, through his grace, to suppress all evil affections, concupiscences, lusts, and desires. Keep your heart so pure that nothing may come from you but pureness, virtue, and godly innocency. Remember that so many as are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized into his death. They are buried

* Or rather Agur. Prov. xxx.

together with him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from death through the glory of the Father, so they likewise should walk in a new life. If ye be risen again with Christ, seek for those things that are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. Provide for those things that are above and not upon the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. If ye do these things, and follow the teaching of your schoolmaster Christ, so that ye deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, then shall ye show yourselves to have been good students in the school of Christ; and ye shall take forth a new lesson, which here follows. That ye should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Eu. This is a godly lesson.

Ph. Labour therefore the more diligently to remember it. Before, ye heard how ye must forsake sin; now ye are taught to practise virtue and godliness. For it is not enough to cease from doing evil, except we also do good; as the psalmist says, Depart from evil and do good. Also the prophet, Cease to do evil, learn to do good. Therefore as before we were taught to decline from evil, so are we here admonished to do good and to embrace virtue. And in this our lesson, which I now last rehearsed, we are taught how to behave ourselves both towards ourselves, our neighbours, and God, in this world. We must live soberly towards ourselves, righteously towards our neighbours, and godly towards God. Here is the whole life of a Christian man painted, described, and set forth in few words. To live so that we neither offend ourselves, our neighbours, nor God. Is not this the whole sum of the Christian religion? What is the duty of a Christian man more to do?

Ch. What is it to live soberly?

Ph. To live soberly, seems to be, so purely, discreetly, modestly, temperately, and sagely to institute our life, that our conscience should never accuse us of any evil, but testify with us, that we live and do all things, godly. He that thus liveth, liveth soberly. For there is a certain sobriety as well in the mind as in the body. There is also a certain drunkenness in the mind as well as in the body. Likewise as the body is accounted sober and in safe estate so long as it is not distempered with the superfluity of meats and drinks; so in like manner, so long as the mind is not troubled with vicious affections, but remains in her native purity, it is accounted sober. So that we are here taught, not only to

live soberly, modestly, and temperately concerning the body, but also the mind. For a Christian man must have a special respect to the mind, which being drunken with vices, what does the sobriety of the body profit? If I keep my body sober, and in ever so good temperance, and my mind be drunken with wrath, ire, contention, desire of vengeance, licentious practices, unclean thoughts, and such other carnal affections and worldly lusts, what doth it profit? Therefore as the body is to be kept from drunkenness, so must the mind be from vices. Then shall we be truly sober and live well toward ourselves. But forasmuch as at this time of Christmas, men universally are most of all given to banqueting, voluptuous eating and drinking, so that Christian sobriety and moderate temperance are forgotten by many; and gluttony and drunkenness bear chief rule; therefore, I desire you, brothers, by the tender mercies of God, that ye live soberly and beware of surfeiting and drunkenness. Use a sober and temperate diet. Overcharge not your stomachs with too much eating and drinking. Let others glory in their Christmas banquets made for the belly; have you your whole rejoicing, pleasure, and delight in the meat which perisheth not, but abideth into everlasting life. Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Be not drunken with wine wherein is excess. Cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Walk honestly as in the light, not in banqueting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, nor yet in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that we live not to eat, but eat to live. And nature is contented with a little; whatsoever is superfluous is sinful and damnable. Remember that Adam and Eve did fall through gluttony. Remember that Noah when he was drunken, was uncovered in his tent. Remember that Lot being drunken, committed incest with his two daughters. Remember that when the children of Israel had sat down to eat and drink, they fell straightway into idolatry, and worshipped the golden calf. Remember that Ammon, the brother of Absalom, was slain at a banquet when he was drunk. Remember that at a banquet it was granted that St. John Baptist should lose his head; and yet no cause why, but a little envy, and because he would tell the king truth, which the flatterers who were about him could not endure. Remember that the rich glutton who fared

daintily every day, was buried and thrown down into hell. Remember that the occasion of the wickedness of Sodom was pride, fulness of meat, abundance, and idleness. All these are terrible histories against gluttony and drunkenness. Again, what diseases come thereof! How many sorrows and troubles do they bring to man's body! Let us hear what Solomon saith, Where is woe? where is sorrow? where is strife? where is brawling? where are wounds without a cause? where are red eyes? Even among those that are ever at the wine, and seek out where the best is. Therefore keep no company with wine-bibbers, and riotous eaters of flesh, for such as are drunkards and riotous shall come to poverty. Therefore, good neighbours, that we may eschew all these great perils, let us cast away all gluttony and drunkenness, live soberly, practise moderate temperance, and so embrace Christian sobriety, that we may be sober both in body and mind. So shall we be the more able to do our duty toward our neighbours.

Th. Truth it is, for he that cannot order himself well toward himself, shall do his duty badly toward his neighbours. I pray God give us grace; first to look upon ourselves as we ought to do, and afterwards to behave ourselves toward our neighbours as it becomes us.

Ph. This is a godly desire. We are taught of Christ our schoolmaster, not only to live soberly, which concerns ourselves, but also righteously, which touches our neighbours. To live righteously is to do to every man as we are bound by the commandment of God. For the office of righteousness is to give every one his own. This our lesson—That we should live righteously—comprehends all the second table of the ten commandments. For justice and righteousness require that we honour our father and mother, reverence them, and do for them whatsoever lieth in our power. It requires of us that we also have in honour all temporal magistrates, and so many as are our superiors. It requires again that we give to the ministers of God's word double honour, that is to say, a hearty external reverence, and also all things that are necessary for their living, that their most godly exercises may not be hindered. It requires that we slay no man, and do no man any harm, but walk charitably toward all men; speak and report well of all men; help, comfort, and succour them, yea, though they be our extreme enemies, and seek our death. (Matt. v.)

For the commandment of our Schoolmaster is this, Love your enemies, pray for them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, &c. It requires that we commit not adultery; but that every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband. (1 Cor. vii.) It requires that we do no theft nor steal any thing from our neighbour, nor bribe away his goods unjustly, nor deceive him in bargaining; but help him, maintain him, succour him, and do for him unto the uttermost of our power; that he may want no good thing. It requires that we bear no false witness against our neighbour, nor obscure his good name; nor yet do any thing at all that may turn him to displeasure; but think and speak of him gently, friendly, and charitably, interpreting all things unto the best, and covering his faults, where there is hope of amendment. It requires of us, that we do not covet our neighbour's house, wife, servant, handmaid, nor any thing that is his; but that we wish well unto him, and to all that he hath, being contented with that which God hath given us, be it little or much. To be short, to live righteously is to do unto others as we would they should do unto us. He that doeth these things aforesaid liveth righteously, and behaveth himself toward his neighbour as he is bound by the commandment of God.

Ch. Now have we learned our duty both toward ourselves and our neighbours. Now declare unto us, I pray you, how we ought to behave ourselves toward God.

Ph. Christ our schoolmaster teaches us not only to live soberly and righteously, but also godly.—That is, to believe that there is but one true and living God; to cleave unto him as the foundation of all goodness; to seek for all health and salvation at his hand; to love him with the whole mind, heart, power, and soul; to call upon his most blessed name; to praise him in all kinds of fortune; to seek his glory above all things, and to serve him according to his word.

Eu. Blessed is he to whom it is given to live thus godly.

Ph. Neighbours, now have ye learned the whole plan of Christ's school, and what he teaches. His doctrine is this, that ye should deny ungodliness and worldly concupiscence, and that ye should live soberly, righteously, and godly. Look therefore, that ye follow this teaching, and practise it in your daily conversation, that ye may be

found no forgetful hearers, but fervent doers of such things as ye have heard and learned. Deny ungodliness, and forsake all that ever is contrary to God's honour, praise, worship, and glory. Mortify your carnal affections and worldly lusts. Become new men in your living. Away with the works of darkness, and on with the fruits of the Spirit. Put on the armour of light, and cast away the works of darkness. Be no longer darkness, but light in the Lord. Shine in the world as great lights. Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Live soberly, modestly, temperately, discreetly, and wisely towards yourselves. Do nothing whereof your consciences may either condemn or accuse you. Live righteously toward your neighbour. Do none otherwise unto him, than ye would he should do unto you. Live godly towards God. Seek his glory in all things, and worship him according to his word, and not after your own blind fancy and fleshly imagination. Thus doing, ye shall show yourselves scholars not altogether unworthy such a schoolmaster.

But ye must note that all these things must be done in this present world, as your New Year's Gift hath it. For THIS is the time of grace, favour, comfort, and remission of sins, as God saith by the prophet; I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee. Behold now is that well accepted time, behold now is that day of salvation. Seek the Lord while he may be found. In this world there is time of mercy, favour, and grace. Here it is lawful to lament our sins. Here may we undoubtedly believe, trust, and obtain remission of our sins. After this life there remaineth nothing but either everlasting pain or eternal glory, as Cyprian saith, When we go once out of this world, there is no more place of repentance, there is no more satisfaction to be made. For life is here either lost or gotten; here is provision made for eternal health, with the worshipping of God and the fruit of faith. Let no man discourage himself because of the multitude of his sins, or by reason that he has been so long a sinner, thinking that by this means he shall obtain health the less. For so long as we are in this world, there is no repentance too late. There is a way to obtain favour, and they that seek and understand

the truth, shall soon come by it. Therefore in this world must we deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. In this world must we live soberly, righteously, and godly. So doing we may with a good and free conscience do that which follows, ever looking for that blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ. A good servant needs not to fear his master's coming; for in his absence he has been faithful and diligent to do the thing which his master willed him to do; therefore may he lawfully, even with joy and gladness, look for his master's return. So likewise a Christian man that walketh in the way of the Lord, and doeth that which he is appointed by the law of God, and seeks above all things the accomplishment of his Master's will, may, with a free, glad, and joyful conscience, look for the coming of Christ at the day of judgment, which shall be terrible to the wicked, but comfortable to the faithful. And verily, so many as hope to be saved at that great day, ought so to behave themselves in this world, that they may with joy at all times look for it. And they ought to be so much the more diligent, seeing the time is uncertain when it shall be. Of that day and time, saith Christ, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son himself, save only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when that time is. As a man which is gone into a strange country, and hath left his house and given authority unto his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house will come; whether at even, or at midnight, whether at the cock crowing, or in the dawning, lest if he come suddenly, he should find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all, watch.

It is to be noted that the Scripture calleth that a blessed hope, wherewith we hope and look for the glorious coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ unto judgment; and not without a cause. For although a Christian man be ever so greatly vexed in this world, yet when he casts the eyes of his faith upon that day, and hopes that Christ shall come and give him eternal glory, according to his faith, this makes him blessed, joyful, quiet, and contented with a glad heart, patiently and thankfully to bear whatsoever cross God layeth on his back. We are saved through hope, saith St. Paul. Dearly beloved, saith St. John, we

are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be; but we know that if he once appear, we shall be like unto him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. The hope of saints is full of immortality, saith the wise man. It follows, "And the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." At Christ's coming into this world, he came altogether poorly. He was born of a poor maid, in a stable, wrapt in simple clothes, and laid in a manger among brute beasts. He was brought up homely, lived hardly, not having where once to rest his head. All the time of his life, he was of such ignominy among the priests, head rulers, scribes, pharisees, and sadducees, that at the last they put him unto the most spiteful death of the cross as a pestiferous malefactor, a deceiver of the people, a teacher of new learning, an enemy to our mother the holy church, &c. But when he shall appear again, and come unto judgment, his appearing shall be glorious, his coming shall be royal, victorious, and triumphant. He shall not come humbly and simply as a base person, but like a great and almighty God; like a Lord full of all puissance, might, and power, terrible to the wicked, and amiable to the faithful. He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. Then shall he sit upon the seat of his glory; and there shall be gathered before him all nations. He shall show himself to be a great God, and such a one as none is able to be compared unto him.

It shall be known at that time, that he was and is the true Son of God, and that very true Messias, which was promised of God by the prophets, whatsoever the wicked Jews say to the contrary. Then shall it be manifest to all men, that the gods of the Gentiles are devils, and that there is no other God but this our God alone. Then shall they that are the adversaries of his truth, and enemies of his most holy gospel, know how greatly they have erred, blasphemed the divine verity, persecuted his faithful servants, and maintained pernicious doctrine. Yea, then shall they receive a reward worthy their wickedness and tyranny. He shall show himself such a great God, that it shall lie in his power to give to the faithful everlasting life, and to the wicked eternal damnation. Oh! great is the Lord, and worthy very much to be praised, and there is no end of his greatness, saith the psalmist. Needs must our Lord

God be great, seeing he replenishes both heaven and earth with the majesty of his glory. No place is there any where, but that his power reaches unto it. Heaven is my seat, and earth is my footstool, what house will ye build for me, saith the Lord? or what place is it that I should rest in? Hath not my hand made all these things?

But it is to be noted that Christ is not only called a great God, but also a Saviour, yea, and our Saviour. So that at the day of judgment, he shall not only appear a great and mighty God to all men, but also a bounteous and merciful Saviour to the faithful; as St. Paul witnesseth. Our conversation is in heaven, saith he, from whence we also look for a Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, which shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according unto the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Again, when Christ, which is our Life, shall show himself, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. This great God is Christ our Saviour, and not Mary, Peter, James, Michael, Francis, Dominic, Augustine, or any other. He shall both save and lead his people with him into eternal glory. For as he shall say to the wicked, Depart and go away from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels, so shall he say to his faithful people, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Oh sweet saying, more full of joy and comfort than can be expressed.

Ch. Lord, I beseech thee, for thy great mercies, so to assist us with thy Holy Spirit, that we may so walk before thee in this life, according to thy most holy word, that we may be found in the number, at that day, of thy blessed children, to whom thou of thy free grace shalt give that most glorious inheritance.

Ph. Your desire is godly. Ye shall hear more of your New Year's Gift, for it draws towards an end. "Which gave himself for us, to redeem us from all unrighteousness." That there can be no Saviour for us but Christ alone, these words prove manifestly; forasmuch as none other but he only, gave himself for us to redeem us from all unrighteousness. Was Paul crucified for us? or were we baptized in the name of Paul? What saint at any time thought himself so pure, immaculate, and without all spot of sin, that he durst presume to die for us, and to avouch

his death to be an oblation and sacrifice for our sins to God the Father; except peradventure we will admit for good payment these and such like blasphemies, which were wont in Latin full solemnly to be sung in the temples, unto the great ignominy of the glorious name of God, and the dishonour of Christ's most precious blood. "O good Jesu, forgive us our debts through the merits of Thomas, and raise us up from the threefold death. O good Jesu, release us of our sins which bind us, through Thomas's wounds. All things give place and obey Thomas, pestilences, diseases, death, and devils; fire, air, earth, and the seas. Thomas filled the world full of glory. He maketh clean lepers. He looseneth them that are bound, from the bonds of death." How say ye to this? Is it not good stuff?* I let pass many more which are very easy to be searched and found out. What are, if these be not, blasphemies? What obscure the price of Christ's death, if these wicked sentences do not? Ah Lord! what blindness occupied the world, when such wicked doctrine crept in and was received into the church, and made, in a manner, of equal authority with the Holy Scripture. O Satan, great is thy craft, unsearchable is the subtlety of thy wicked imaginations.

Eu. I have never heard or read more pestilent and abominable blasphemies than these are. Is this any other than as Lucifer said, I will climb up into heaven, and make my seat above the stars of God; I will sit upon the glorious mount toward the north; I will climb up above the clouds, and will be like the Highest of all? Is it not the office of God to forgive us our sins for the merits of Christ? Doth it not pertain unto God to raise us up from death? Are not our sins only released for Christ's wounds' sake? Is not all power given unto Christ both in heaven and in earth? Are not all things in the hand of God, to do with them whatsoever his most godly pleasure shall be? Is it not God alone that loosens the sinful from the bonds of death? How then can these things be justly ascribed to a mortal creature, begotten, conceived, and born in sin; yea, and as some judge of him, a traitor both to God and his prince. Is a sinner fit to pay a sinner's ransom? Is a traitor a convenient person to make means for another

* These prayers are from the Romish service for the day on which that church commemorates Thomas à Becket.

traitor unto a king whom both of them have offended? What prince can endure the sight of them?

Ph. Ye say truth. It therefore follows well that neither Thomas, Francis, Dominic, Augustine, nor any other creature, either in heaven or in earth, were they ever so holy, and suffered they ever so great pains, could be our Saviour; but Christ alone, that pure and immaculate Lamb of God, who gave himself for us, as your New Year's Gift saith, to redeem us from all unrighteousness. Mark that he saith, Which gave himself for us. These words express the unspeakable kindness of Christ toward us, seeing that when we had deserved no such gentleness, he was contented to come down from the glory of his Father, and to become man for our sake; yea, and to give himself unto death, to reconcile us unto God the Father, and to make an atonement between him and us. He gave himself for us. He suffered death willingly. It was not the violence of the Jews that drew him unto his sufferings, but his own voluntary will. The fervent and burning love that he had in his breast towards mankind, caused him to take that death upon him and to suffer those most cruel pains. So that he did all things willingly, as the prophet saith, He was offered because it was his pleasure, and he did not once open his mouth. Christ himself also saith, Therefore doth my Father also love me, because I put my life from me, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I put it away of myself. I have power to put it from me, and have power to take it again. Thus we see that Christ, without any compulsion, suffered death for our sake. He gave himself, and no angel, nor any other creature either in heaven or in earth, for us—for us men, I say, although ever so grievous sinners, if we repent, believe, and amend. Oh most precious and incomparable gift! There is one God, saith St. Paul, and one atonement-maker of God and men, even the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all men. Christ gave himself for us, Wherefore? To redeem us from all unrighteousness.

To redeem us, is to buy us again when we are lost, to pay our ransom, to satisfy for our sins, to deliver us out of captivity, to bring us home again to our true Owner, to restore us to our old liberty, to set us again in that favour wherein we were with God the Father before we offended. All this hath Christ, and none other, done for us by his

most precious blood. The shedding of his blood was the perfect and wholly sufficient ransom for all our sins, as St. John saith, The blood of Jesus Christ maketh us clean from all sin. By his own blood, saith St. Paul, entered Christ, once for all, into the holy place, and found everlasting redemption. Again, We are made holy by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ, done once for all. Also, by Christ have we redemption, and by his blood remission and forgiveness of our sins. By the blood of Christ's cross are all things pacified and set at rest, that are either in earth or in heaven.

Ch. Hath Christ by his blood redeemed us from all unrighteousness? Let me ask you one question, What do you understand by unrighteousness?

Ph. Unrighteousness is here taken for sin, and for all that we offend God with. From all this hath Christ redeemed us.

Ch. I have heard some say that Christ only redeemed us from original sin; and that as for all other sins, we must make amends and satisfy for them ourselves, by our own works and merits.

Ph. This is not far from their opinion who hold that there is no remission of those sins that are committed after baptism. But as that is a heresy, so is this no godly doctrine. Of the remission of sin after baptism, we talked the last Lent abundantly in our Potation.* Therefore leaving that, I will show and prove now unto you, that Christ hath redeemed us from all unrighteousness, as your New Year's Gift saith, and that by his blood we are delivered not only from original sin, but also from actual, venial, mortal, call them by what name you will, if so be that they who offend, repent, believe, and take a new life upon them. Only the sin against the Holy Ghost which hath desperation and obstinate malice for its companions, is irremissible and never forgiven, forasmuch as it excludes repentance, faith, and amendment of life; as Christ witnesses, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him, but he that speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Again, all sins shall be forgiven to the children of men, and blasphemies where-

* Becon's tract so called.

with soever they blaspheme; but he that blasphemeth the Holy Ghost shall never have forgiveness, but is guilty to everlasting damnation. This is the sin which St. John calleth the sin unto death; for which he would that no man should pray. Of these words it is evident that all sin shall be forgiven men, if they repent, believe, and amend, except the sin against the Holy Ghost.

But now let us see by what means these sins are forgiven; whether for our deeds and merits, or for the sake of Christ's blood, and so shall we easily perceive whether Christ by his death hath delivered us only from original sin, or rather from all others universally. By the prophet Isaiah, Christ speaketh on this manner—I am he, I am he, which put away thine unrighteousnesses, yea, and that for mine own sake, and I will remember thy sins no more. Mark that he saith unrighteousnesses and sins, in the plural number, because no man should cavil and say that Christ only putteth away one offence, which is the original sin. St. Paul, in our New Year's Gift, saith, Christ gave himself to redeem us from all unrighteousness. And by the prophet, Christ saith that he putteth away our unrighteousnesses and sins. Is it not all one? Do they not both tell one tale? So we see that it is no new doctrine to say, that Christ putteth away all our sins, both original, actual, venial, mortal, &c. They that affirm the contrary, derogate not a little from the virtue and glory of Christ's death, and are verily they whom St. Paul calleth the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is damnation, whose God is their belly, &c. These are those false prophets and lying teachers, who, as Peter prophesied, should come, and privily bring in damnable sects, denying the Lord which bought them. Are not they very enemies of Christ's cross, and do not they utterly deny him, who teach that Christ by his passion, blood, and death, did put away but one sin; and that for those which we commit after baptism, we ourselves must satisfy and make amends, so that for them there is no remission and forgiveness to be asked of God the Father for Jesus Christ's sake? What else is this than to make ourselves equal with Christ, yea, to exalt ourselves above Christ, and to hold that our good deeds and merits are of greater price, and more value than the death and blood of Christ? For this doctrine, I grant, teaches that Christ is a Saviour, but yet that he saves only from original sin, which we received of our

first father Adam, so that by him we are delivered but from one sin. Again, it teaches that we ourselves are saviours, forasmuch as we save ourselves through our good deeds and merits, from all those sins which we commit after baptism. Now let us see whether Christ be the better Saviour, or we ourselves; and whether there is more salvation in the death of Christ, or in our good works. According to this Christ by his death saveth only from one sin, which is original; we save ourselves from many and innumerable sins (for seven times in a day sinneth the righteous) which we commit after baptism! Therefore we are better saviours than Christ, and there is more virtue of salvation in our works, than in the blood and death of Christ! So that Christ is but a quarter Saviour, and we make up the whole! Oh pernicious and devilish doctrine! Who hath ever opened his mouth to speak blasphemies against the Most High, if they do it not who maintain this wicked and damnable doctrine?

But let us hear more Scriptures. The prophet Isaiah saith, Unfeignedly he, that is to say Christ, hath taken upon him our sicknesses, and borne our sorrows. Again, He was wounded for our wickedness, and broken for our mischievous and ungracious acts. Behold, how universally the Scripture speaks—our sicknesses, sorrows, and wickednesses, our mischievous and ungracious acts. Are all these but one sin? If they are many, therefore Christ delivered us from many. If he delivered us from many, therefore not from original sin alone. To what point are the authors of this wicked doctrine come now? With what eyes do they look upon the Holy Scriptures? With what spirit do they search the mysteries of God? Let us hear what the psalmist saith—Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Which forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine infirmities. Which saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness. David here boasts not of his good deeds, neither cleaves he unto them as the authors of his salvation, but he praises the Lord and magnifies him for his benefits; confessing that whatsoever he hath, being either good or godly, cometh of God and not of himself, and therefore is He worthy of all praise, honour, and glory. He acknowledges that God forgiveth him all his sins, and healeth all his infirmities. Where is any exception here, I

pray you? God forgiveth all; what remaineth then behind to be forgiven? Is original sin only now forgiven through Christ? Moreover he saith that God saveth his life from destruction, and crowneth him with mercy and loving-kindness. Are not these words plain enough? He grants that God preserveth him from damnation; again, that God crowneth him, that is to say, giveth him eternal glory, even of his own free mercy and tender goodness. What would we have more? God forgiveth us all our sins, healeth all our infirmities, saveth our life from destruction and crowneth us with mercy and loving-kindness. What can he do more to show himself a Saviour, and that there is none that saveth from sins, be they original, actual, venial, or mortal, but he alone?

Th. He is twice unkind to God and his Son Christ, that cannot bear these things.

Ph. You say truth. But let us come to the New Testament. When Gabriel came unto Joseph, after he was minded to go from Mary privily; he said, Joseph, the son of David, fear not to take Mary thy wife unto thee, for that which is conceived in her, cometh of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Here are two notable things to be marked. One is, that Christ is called Jesus, which, as ye heard before, is by interpretation, a Saviour. Another is, that it is he that saveth his people from their sins. His name declares him manifestly to be a Saviour. And because no man should think that Christ is called a Saviour, only because he saveth us from the danger of original sin, therefore the angel speaks here in the plural number, and saith that he shall save his people from their sins, and not from their original sin alone. If Christ saveth us from sins, he saveth us from more sins than one. St. John Baptist also pointing to Christ with his finger, said, Behold that Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world! We will ponder every word of this sentence. First, St. John saith, Behold! whereby he declareth that he will show a new, strange, and wonderful thing. Was not this a thing both strange and to be wondered at, to see one in so vile fashion, so poorly apparelled, of no substance, having so slender a guard to wait upon him; and so little worship, honour, and reverence shown unto him; that he should be the Saviour of the world, and He that should reign over all nations and

kingdoms. This was strange to the gross Jews and fine pharisees, who thought that the Messias should come into the world with great pomp and glory, subduing other nations to them by martial armour, and by a strong hand and mighty power; notwithstanding the Scripture saith, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting on an ass, &c. Therefore I think St. John might say unto them, "Behold," twice, before they would hearken unto him once in such a case, or in the least believe him. But let us see what St. John intended to show us. Behold, saith he, that Lamb of God. By these words, That Lamb of God, he setteth forth very much the dignity of Christ, and showeth that there is a special respect to be had unto him; and that we ought to cast our eyes upon him as our only Saviour, and upon none other. For he is that Lamb of God which was prefigured by the paschal Lamb, with whose blood they that are sprinkled are safe, and without all jeopardy of being slain. The other lamb was taken out of the flock, but this Lamb is the Lamb of God, given us of God to be a sacrifice for our sins; to be our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It follows, Which taketh away the sin of the world. Christ is that Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The blood of Christ maketh us clean from all sin. By the offering up of the body of Christ, done once for all, are we sanctified and made holy. But note that St. John saith, Which taketh away. He uses here the present tense and not the preter, nor yet the future; which declares that the virtue of Christ's death abideth every one, and that it is of as much strength now as ever it was; and that by it our sins are daily forgiven, no less than they were at the very hour of his death, when our ransom was paid. For his blood crieth not for vengeance as the blood of Abel, but for grace, mercy, and favour; and the dignity of it is so great, that it is never said nay, but it obtains whatsoever it asketh. So that, as St. John saith, Christ, that pure and immaculate Lamb of God, doth still daily and continually take away—what? Verily the sin of the world. Now if Christ taketh away sin daily and continually, so followeth it well, that he taketh away more sins than the original sin.

That St. John saith "sin," hinders not our argument, if it be truly understood; for by this word "sin" doth

St. John understand the whole lump of sin that is in the world, whether it be that which we committed in Adam, or those which, after our baptism, through the raging carnal affections that are in us, we commit, in thought, word, or deed. All this whole lump of sin, that is to say, all that ever is contained under this word sin, or yet pertaineth unto sin, doth Christ, that Lamb of God, at all times take away. What authority of the Scripture can be recited more open and evident against them?

When Christ hanging upon the cross, had paid a sufficient ransom for our sins by the shedding of his most precious blood, he commended his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father, and, bowing down his head, said, It is finished; that is to say, every thing is now consummate, perfect, and fully finished. (John xix.) The sacrifice for sin is offered, and a plentiful ransom is paid, so that now all sacrifices, all oblations for sin cease. This one sacrifice, this one oblation, which I have made upon the altar of the cross, finisheth and maketh perfect all things; so that there remaineth after this none other sacrifice for any kind of sin. Hereto agrees the saying of St. Paul; Christ our Bishop abideth for ever, and hath an everlasting priesthood; so that he is able to save, even to the full, them that come unto God by him; ever living, that he may make intercession for us. Again, Christ by his own blood entered into the holy place once for all, and found everlasting redemption. Also, with one oblation hath Christ made them consummate and perfect for evermore, that are sanctified. Thus we see, that all things are thoroughly finished, made consummate and perfect by Christ, so that there is no more sacrifice for sin left behind to put away sin; but if we will have remission of our wickednesses, we must run with the feet of our mind to that sacrifice, which Christ offered once for all upon the altar of the cross, that he might put sin to flight for evermore.

Now if Christ had put away only original sin by his death, then had he not made all things perfect; for then he had left more sins unforgiven, than were forgiven by his death. How great and infinite is the number of those sins which we commit after baptism, in comparison with this one original sin! This were but a slender consummation and making perfect, so to leave us in more sins, than we were found. But Christ saveth at the full. He maketh them perfect for evermore, that are sanctified. The virtue

of Christ's sacrifice is so great, and of so much dignity before God the Father, that it lasteth ever in full strength to put away sin, yea, and that not only before, but also after baptism.

Paul, as a good and faithful servant, agrees with his Master. To the Romans he saith, God setteth forth his love toward us, in that Christ died for us when we were yet sinners. Much more then shall we be saved from wrath by him, seeing we are now made righteous through his blood. For if we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son when we were enemies, much more shall we be saved by him now that we are reconciled. Here St. Paul proves that as we are reconciled to God the Father by the death of his Son, Christ, so are we also, by him, saved from all wrath and displeasure that should fall upon us. Are not these words plain enough? At baptism, we are purged through Christ's blood from original sin and all others that we have committed before; so that we are reconciled to God, and accounted for righteous. Now by Christ also are we preserved from the wrath of God, which we deserve through the wickedness which we do after baptism. Hereof then may we gather that Christ is not only a Saviour unto us before, but also after baptism. So may we conclude, that by Christ's death we are not only redeemed from original sin, but also from all others by whatsoever names they are called. Again he saith, It is not with the gift as with the sin; for if through the sin of one many be dead, yet much more plenteously came the grace and gift of God upon many, by the favour that belonged unto one man, Jesus Christ. And the gift is not only over one sin, as death came through one sin, of one that sinned; for the judgment came of one sin unto condemnation, but the gift to justify from many sins. Do not these words evidently show that by Christ we are justified and made righteous from many sins? If from many sins, then not from one sin alone. Again, to the Corinthians, First of all I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Mark that St. Paul saith, for our sins, and not for our sin wherewith we all offended in Adam. To the Colossians also he writeth on this manner: By Christ we have redemption, and by his blood remission of sins. Note, by Christ's blood we have remission of sins, not only original, but also actual, mortal, venial, &c.

and not by the works which we do after baptism, as though it lay in our power to fulfil the law, to satisfy the will of God, to appease the divine wrath, and to obtain everlasting life. For all these things come unto us by Christ, and are obtained for us by Christ's death, and not by any works or merits of man, as St. Paul saith, If righteousness cometh by the law, then died Christ in vain. Again, We know that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; and we believe in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, because that no man shall be justified by the works of the law. Also, Ye are gone quite from Christ, as many of you as will be made righteous by the law, yea, ye are fallen from grace. Again, in another place, They, not knowing the righteousness of God, and labouring to establish their own righteousness, were not obedient to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the perfection of the law unto justification for every one that believeth. Once again, If salvation cometh of grace, then is it not of works, else were grace no grace; but if it come of works then is grace nothing.

All these sentences teach us that we are delivered from all our sins, by Christ and his righteousness, and not by our own works and deservings. Moreover St. Paul saith, When ye were dead through sins and the uncircumcision of the flesh, God quickened you with Christ, and forgave us all our sins, and put out the handwriting that was against us, contained in the written law, and that hath he taken out of the way, and fastened it to the cross; and hath spoiled rule and power, and hath made a show of them openly, and triumphed over them in his own person. God hath forgiven us all our sins through Christ, saith St. Paul here. Where is any exception? If there be more sins than the original sin, as there are, them also hath God the Father forgiven us through Jesus Christ our Lord. To the Hebrews again he writes, Christ in his own person purged our sins, and is set on the right hand of the majesty on high. From our sins hath Christ made us clean, and not from one sin only. Christ was offered once for all to take away the sins of many. All shall not be saved for all do not believe, but many shall be saved, and they have not only original sin, but also all their other sins taken away by Christ. Again, Every priest is ready, daily ministering, and oftentimes offereth one manner of offer-

ings which can never take away sin. But this man, Christ, when he had offered for sins one sacrifice, which is of value for ever, sat him down on the right hand of God, and from henceforth tarrieth till his foes be made his footstool. For with one offering hath he made perfect for ever them that are sanctified. St. Paul here compares Christ, the everlasting Bishop and Priest, with the priests of the old law. He shows that they offered sacrifices daily, and yet could they never put away sin by them. No marvel, for they were only shadows of good things to come. But this our head Priest, Christ, hath offered but one sacrifice, not for the original sin only, but for sins, saith he; and yet is it of so great virtue and strength, that it is of value for ever; the power of it never decays, it abides in full strength, so long as any sin remains; so that it needs not oftentimes to be offered, as the sacrifices of the old law were. For with this one sacrifice, which was the oblation of his body, hath he made them for ever so perfect that are sanctified, that they need no other sacrifice to make them holy and acceptable in the sight of God. All that have had their sins forgiven them from the beginning of the world until this day, or shall have unto the end of the world, have had, and shall have all their sins forgiven them, through this one sacrifice of Jesus Christ.—Thus have I opened unto you the mind of St. Paul concerning this matter.

Eu. His sayings prove manifestly that we are redeemed by Christ, not only from original sin, but also from all other.

Ph. You say truth: Well, ye shall hear now the minds of the other apostles. St. Peter saith, Christ his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree; that we, being delivered from sins, should live unto righteousness. Note how Peter agrees in every point with his fellow, Paul. He strongly affirms, that Christ his ownself, and none other, bare our sins in his body, and not our original sin alone. By his stripes we were made so whole, that there remained not so much as a scar of all our sores, botches, and wounds. St. John saith, The blood of Jesus Christ makes us thoroughly clean, yea, and that from all sin. Can anything be spoken more generally? If the blood of Jesus Christ makes us clean from all sin, what remaineth there behind, I pray you? So it follows that the sins original, actual, mortal, venial, and what not, all are washed

away by Christ's blood. Again, If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to make us clean from all wickedness. This one text alone of St. John is able to subvert, overturn, and throw down all the building, shores, and props wherewith these slighty daubers uphold their enterprises. If we confess our sins, saith he. If we that profess the Christian religion, and yet, through our fragility and weakness of nature, have offended God after our baptism, contrary to our vow and promise made thereat; if we, I say, after that we have fallen, confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous —what to do? To forgive us our sins. Note, our sins, and to make us clean from all unrighteousness. What sin is it then, I pray you, from which he does not make us clean? This sentence must needs be understood of them who offend after baptism. Now, saith St. John, although we sin, yet let us not despair, but rather let us repent, bewail our sinful living, detest our wicked manners, turn unto God, and confess our sins unto him. If we do this, we doubt not but that God, who is faithful in performing his promise, (he hath promised them that come unto him with a faithful and repentant heart remission of their sins,) and righteous in forgiving the penitent and sorrowful sinner, and in condemning the wicked who continues in his ungodliness, without any confession of his fault and amendment of life, will forgive us our sins, yea, and make us clean from all unrighteousness.

These words prove manifestly that God forgives our sins after baptism, if we repent, confess, and amend. Whereof cometh this? Of the merits of our works, or of the free grace and mere mercy of God, purchased for us by Jesus Christ, for whose sake the wrath of God the Father is pacified, and he is well pleased and fully contented with man? Verily for Christ's sake doth God show to us this exceeding and great mercy in forgiving us our sins, whensoever we call unto him, with a contrite and sorrowful heart, as St. John proves by the words that follow; My little children, I write these things unto you, that ye should not sin; and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ that righteous one; and he is that sacrifice which appeaseth God's wrath, and satisfieth (so meaneth the Greek word) for our sins, not for our sins only, but also for all the world's. As though he should say, My little children, I have declared unto

you, that although we sin after baptism, contrary to our profession, yet there is grace, favour, mercy, and forgiveness of sins laid up for us in store, if we repent, confess our faults, and intend unfeignedly to amend our lives. I have not done this to engraft in you a vain hope, and to encourage you to have the more pleasure, and to remain in your old wickedness, but I write these things unto you that ye should not sin. I have set forth the kindness of God towards you, that you should endeavour yourselves to live worthily of it. But forasmuch as there liveth no man in this world that sinneth not, and seeing we cannot walk so purely, but that at some time we must needs fall; therefore because ye should not despair, but be assuredly persuaded that there remaineth health for you with the Lord God; I certify you, that we have one who is our Advocate with the Father, who pleads our matter before the throne of the divine majesty, who is ready to help us, who ceases not making intercession for us, until he is heard. And this is not such a one as hath also offended, but Jesus Christ, that righteous one, who is godly, innocent, undefiled, pure, clean, faultless, immaculate, and so without all spot of vice, that even for his own dignity, worthiness, and innocency, he is worthy to obtain whatsoever he asketh. And I say moreover unto you, that not our own works, nor the merits of others; but that righteous one, Christ, is that very sacrifice which appeases God's wrath, whom we have provoked unto anger with the sins which we do commit, and who satisfies for our sins. Yea, he makes not only a sufficient and plenteous amends for our sins, but also for all the whole world's. I mean so many as repent them of their wicked living, confess their faults, believe, desire forgiveness, and labour to lead a new life.

What will we have more? Does not St. John declare here evidently that our sins, whensoever they are committed or done, are forgiven us of God, through Jesus Christ, who is our Advocate, and that sacrifice which appeases God the Father's wrath, and plenteously satisfies for our sins? So it then manifestly appears that Christ hath not only redeemed us and satisfied to God the Father for original sin, but also for all other. But let us yet hear more; he saith, I write unto you, little children, that your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. Therefore our sins, and not one sin alone, are forgiven us; not for our own

works and merits, but for Christ's name, that is to say, for the dignity, worthiness, excellency, merits, and deservings of Christ. Again, In this appeared the love of God toward us, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we should live through him. In that is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son, to be a sacrifice both to appease his wrath, and to satisfy for our sins. What do I? Paper, ink, pen, and time shall sooner want unto me, than I shall be able to rehearse all the testimonies wherewith it is evidently proved that Christ hath not only by his most blessed and precious blood, redeemed us from original sin, as some wickedly dream, but also from all others, by whatsoever name they are called, the sin against the Holy Ghost excepted. And that whensoever we repent, believe, and amend, God the Father forgiveth us also those sins which we commit after baptism; not for our own deeds, works, and merits, which are more impure than they may be able to stand in the sight of God, who is a consuming fire, a jealous God, great in strength, judgment, and righteousness, and with whom there is none innocent; but for that sweet-smelling sacrifice which Jesus Christ, his well-beloved Son, offered for our sins upon the altar of the cross, once for all; whose virtue and strength abides so perfect for evermore, that by it the sins of so many as with a truly faithful and repentant heart, come unto God, are forgiven, forgotten, and never more remembered. And thus you see that Christ is a perfect Saviour, who, as your New Year's Gift saith, "hath by his blood redeemed us from all unrighteousness." So that, as St. Peter saith, there is salvation in none other, but only in Christ Jesus; neither is there any other name given to men under heaven wherein we must be saved.

Ch. We have now heard it evidently proved by the Holy Scriptures, that we through Christ are delivered from all sin, both original, actual, mortal, venial, &c. So that all the whole glory of our salvation is to be given and ascribed unto God alone. As he saith by the prophet Hosea, O Israel, thy destruction cometh of thyself, but thy health and salvation cometh only of me. This makes all saints and the truly faithful to say, Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give the glory, for thy mercy and truth's sake.

Ph. Well, thus have ye heard imperfectly, yet faithfully

and truly, uttered by me, what the Holy Scriptures determine concerning the remission of sins by Christ; and that by him we are delivered not only from original sin, as some wickedly dream, but also from all others, by whatsoever name they are called.

Now, because ye shall not think that I wrest the Scriptures, which all men ought to handle reverently and uncorruptly, I will rehearse a saying or two unto you of the doctors. Hesychius, lib. ii. cap. viii. saith, "Not one sin only, but many are forgiven us through the sacrifice of Christ, who is the only begotten Son of God. If not one sin only, but many, are forgiven us through the sacrifice of Christ, it follows then that by Christ's death, we are not only redeemed from original sin, but also from all others." Herein agreeth the saying of Ambrose, (in Rom. v.) "The grace of God through Christ hath justified men, not from one sin alone, but from many, by giving them remission of sins." Not from one sin only, saith Ambrose, hath God of his grace through Christ justified and made us righteous, but from many, by giving us remission of sins. Now gather who list. The words are plain enough.

But I will rehearse Augustine of Hippo, one of the best among the ancient doctors, and most faithful expositor of the Holy Scriptures. (Ad Hilarium Epis. lxxxix.) Augustine, writing against the Pelagians and Manichees, speaks thus; What is it to say, Of one fault unto condemnation, but that fault wherewith Adam offended? And what is it to say, From many faults to justification, but that the grace of Christ hath not only loosened that fault wherewith infants are bound, which had their beginning of that one man, but also many faults which, after that men come to age, they add and put unto it through their evil manners. Here saith Augustine plainly, that the grace of Christ hath not only loosened, delivered, and made us free from original sin, wherewith we all offended in Adam, but also from all others which we afterwards commit, as we grow in age. I could rehearse many more authorities, both of this doctor and others, which mainly fortify this matter, but because I will not be tedious unto you, I let them pass, trusting that with these aforesaid ye are fully satisfied.

Alas! good neighbours, what are we of ourselves, that we have so depressed and thrust down the death of Christ, and so exalted ourselves, that He by his passion saving

us from our sin, we should presume to save ourselves, by our own works and merits from many sins! This is a presumption much to be detested. This is a standing in our own conceit more Lucifer-like than that it may be suffered of any Christian heart. To the Lord our God, saith the prophet, be righteousness, but to us and to our fathers, confusion of face. As touching the righteousness, which is in the law, no man could once rebuke me, saith St. Paul, but those things which were advantage unto me, I counted loss for Christ's sake. Yea, moreover, I think all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have counted all things loss, and do judge them but dung, that I might win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness, which cometh of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, namely the righteousness which cometh of God in faith: to know him and the virtue of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings. How cleaveth St. Paul unto Christ! How he rejects and casts away his own righteousness which he had by the outward keeping of the law, that he might, through faith, be made righteous in Christ! How little he esteems his own goodness, so that he may know the virtue of Christ's resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings. All Paul's delectation and pleasure is in Christ and in Christ's death. As he saith in another place, God forbid that I should rejoice in any thing but in the cross, that is to say in the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. If so noble and worthy an apostle had all his delight in Christ, and in his merits, so that for Christ's sake, and to win the righteousness of Christ, he esteemed his own righteousness as vile as the dung, what shall we wretches then say? Shall we lift up ourselves, and open our mouths to speak blasphemies against the Most High? Shall we so trust in our works, that we shall seek more salvation in them than in the Lord Christ? All our righteousnesses, saith the prophet Isaiah, are as a polluted cloth. All sorts of us have erred as sheep; every man hath followed his own way. Every one is a hypocrite, a dissembler, and wicked. No man is able to say, My heart is clean, I am pure from sin. There is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not. All have sinned, and want the glory of God. Seeing we are all in this case, how dare any man avouch himself to be so pure, and

his works to be so good and perfect, that by them he is able to satisfy for his sins committed after baptism?

Eu. Ye say truth. Methinks that those men who are of this opinion, know neither God nor themselves aright.

Ph. Truth it is. For if they did but know that as God is good, righteous, holy, perfect, faultless, and without all spot of sin, so they of themselves are evil, unrighteous, imperfect, sinful, and hedged round about with the filthiness of sin: that if they have any goodness, it cometh of God, and therefore have they nothing whereof they may rejoice; for it is God's and not theirs; they would not stand so much in their own conceit, nor boast so much of their purity and cleanness. If the stars are not pure in the sight of God, and the angels are not clean and faultless before him, how then dare a wretched mortal creature, who sinneth daily, and heapeth wickedness upon wickedness, so advance himself that he dare presume to stand right up, and with an open face before God, who is a consuming fire, and hateth so many as work wickedness; and take upon him to satisfy for his sins by his own righteousness? If they would assay to go down into themselves, and search the bottom of their heart, which is wicked and inscrutable, they would there find such heaps, lumps, and dunghills of sin, that they would be ready to despair and to undo themselves. So far is it off, that they should justify themselves or take upon them to be their own saviours, by their deeds, works, or merits. The consideration of the divine Majesty, and the true knowledge of himself, made David to pray on this manner: O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant, for no man that liveth shall be justified in thy sight. Again, O Lord, if thou shouldest mark our wickednesses, O Lord, who were able to abide it? But there is mercy with thee. Let Israel therefore trust in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

Ch. God give us grace to have the true knowledge of God and of ourselves; so shall we unfeignedly ascribe and give unto God all the glory and praise of our creation, vocation, justification, redemption, salvation, glorification, and whatsoever goodness we have more, and freely confess that we are saved of the great and undeserved grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Ph. I beseech God it may so come to pass. Thus have

I accomplished your desire, neighbours, in proving by the Scriptures, and the ancient doctors, that Christ by his death hath not only redeemed, delivered, and set us free from original sin, but also from all other; and that the sins which we commit after baptism are not forgiven of God the Father for the dignity and worthiness of any works which we do, but for the excellency of that sacrifice which Christ, once for all, offered upon the altar of the cross; the virtue and strength whereof abideth in such full power, that it is able to save as many as repent, believe, and labour to lead a good and innocent life for evermore. Neither have I spoken these things to discourage any man from doing good works, but to set forth Christ to be a perfect Saviour, against the wicked doctrine of those who now begin to creep in among us, to the great dishonour of God, the extreme blasphemy of Christ's most precious blood, and noisome perturbation of the holy catholic church. And that I may knit up all this matter in few words; know, good brothers, that in Adam all we were damned; so that through his wickedness we were begotten, conceived, and born in sin, yea, and by nature are the very sons of wrath.

Now, to be delivered from this miserable state, whereunto we were cast by Adam, we, of our own understanding, policy, wisdom, holiness, righteousness, &c. could invent no means, but still remained in danger of everlasting damnation. Therefore God, moved with pity towards mankind, even of his own free mercy and goodness, without any of our deserts, sent down his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into this vale of misery; who, for our sake took flesh of the most holy and pure virgin Mary; through the operation of the Holy Ghost became man, and at the time afore appointed he offered voluntarily his most blessed body, an acceptable and sweet-smelling sacrifice to God the Father, which was and is of so great virtue and power, that by it alone all our sins are put away; not only that which we committed in Adam, but those also which we ourselves, in process of time, do perpetrate and commit. Now so many of us as are baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and have taken upon us a new life, forsaking the world, the devil, and the flesh, with all their pomps and works, have at the very time of baptism all their sins forgiven them, and are so clearly redeemed, delivered, and made free from all un-

righteousness, be they young or old, as though they had never committed any of them at all. And this is that which St. Paul saith, Christ loved the congregation and gave himself for it, to sanctify it; and cleansed it in the fountain of water through the word, to make it unto himself a glorious congregation without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blame. Now if they, through either fragility or ignorance, do offend and break the law of God, contrary to their profession and vow made at baptism, then have they a holy anchor to fly unto, which is repentance. So that if they truly repent, are sorry for the faults committed, bewail their sinful living, mortify their carnal affections, slay their worldly lusts, banish their devilish concupiscences, confess their wickedness, fly unto the mercy of God, believe to have forgiveness, and take a new life upon them, God the Father will surely forgive them their sins, be they ever so great and many; yea, and that for the dignity of that one sacrifice which his only begotten Son offered, once for all, upon the altar of the cross. So that if repentance and amendment of life come, Christ's sacrifice serveth to put away sins for ever and ever. But as the blood of Christ is sufficient to pacify the Father, although one man had committed so many offences as all the world hath done, or shall do, unto the very end of the world; so likewise is there no salvation laid up for him in store, who will not repent nor cease to sin, although Christ should suffer a hundred thousand times. For Christ is a Saviour to penitent sinners, and not to the wicked and ungodly.

And as there is no damnation to them that are engrafted in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; so is there no health nor salvation to them that live after the flesh, though they babble ever so much of Christ, of Christ's passion, blood, and death, of the remission of sins, of the mercy of God, of the gospel, of the sweet promises of God, and of everlasting life. God hath not called us that we should be unclean, but holy and virtuous. God, saith St. Peter, sent his Son to be a beneficial Saviour unto you, that every one of you should turn from his wickedness. But of this we will speak more hereafter. Therefore, brothers, whensoever ye perceive that ye offend God in any thing, despair not, fly unto repentance, be sorry for your sinful living; bewail your wicked manners, thirst after strength to do the will of God, confess your

sins from the very heart, call for grace, desire mercy, and pray unto God that he will forgive you your faults, and he will undoubtedly remit and forgive you all the faults, sins, and trespasses that ye ever committed against him, for the love that he beareth towards his Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; who, as your New Year's Gift saith, hath redeemed us from all unrighteousness, that is to say, both from original sin and all other.

Eu. Brother Philemon, we shall never be able to recompense this your kindness, which, at our request, hath declared this matter unto us concerning the remission of sins through Christ. I beseech God to give us all grace, so to institute and order our life, that we may be found in the number of those, whose sins are put away by this most holy sacrifice of Christ's blessed body, whose wickednesses are washed away by Christ's most precious blood.

Ch. Amen. For then shall we be sure, not only to be delivered from all our sins, but also to enjoy everlasting life, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ph. We will go on with your New Year's Gift, and make an end. It follows, And to purge us a peculiar people unto himself. Christ gave not himself only to death for to redeem us from all unrighteousness, but also to purge us a peculiar people unto himself. For as he hath redeemed us by his death, so hath he purged, purified, and made us clean by his blood; as St. John saith, The blood of Jesus Christ maketh us clean from all sin. For what intent hath he thus purged and made us clean? Verily that we should be a peculiar people unto himself.

Ch. What is meant by that, I pray you?

Ph. To be the peculiar people of God, is to be chosen out of the unfaithful and wicked people, and to be consecrated, dedicated, and wholly given to serve God, to seek his glory, to magnify his most blessed name, and to do all things according to his word, as the Jews in times past were chosen away from the Gentiles, to be the people of God, to serve him, and to walk in his holy ordinances. Ye are a chosen generation, saith Peter, (1 Peter ii.) a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the virtues of him that called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which were not under mercy, but now have obtained

mercy. Of these words may we learn unto what end Christ hath redeemed and purified us by his blood. Verily that we should be a peculiar people unto himself. Then are we here taught that we may no more from henceforth serve the prince of darkness, be conversant in his court, wear any longer his cognizance,* fulfil any more his pleasure and will; but wholly give ourselves to serve God, who is the Prince of light, yea, and the true Light itself, which lighteneth every man that cometh into this world. What nation willingly serves a strange prince? What faithful and honest servant forsakes a gentle and loving master, and runneth unto a tyrant? How unseemly then were it for us, who before were in so miserable a case, and delivered from it only by the goodness and free heart of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to forsake him, and to run back again unto the powers and rulers of darkness? We are now light in the Lord, shall we become darkness again? We are now the sons of God, shall we become the children of wrath again? We are now the beautiful spouse of Jesus Christ, shall we be made the harlot of Satan again? We are now no more guests and strangers, but citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, shall we become captives and bond-servitors to Satan's court again? We are now by Christ made priests and kings, shall we fall from this dignity, and become villains† and abjects again? We are now the peculiar people of God, sanctified unto his use, and unto the working of those things that make unto his glory; shall we neglect our dignity, worship, and honour, if I may so speak; shall we fall away again from our Master, and so behave ourselves, that this proverb may be worthily objected and laid against us, The dog is returned unto his vomit, and the sow, after she hath washed herself, is gone again to her wallowing in the mire? Therefore, seeing that Christ by his blood hath purified and purged us a peculiar people unto himself, let us manfully fight under the standard of our Captain, against Satan the prince of darkness; let us seek the glory of our Master; let us observe such precepts as he hath commanded; let us reverence, fear, honour, worship, and love him above all things; let us not suffer his most precious blood to be shed in vain; let us so behave ourselves, that it may evidently appear that we are not unkind nor unthankful persons but ever-

* Badge, or distinguishing mark. † Servants.

more walk worthy this kindness and tender compassion. This shall come to pass, if we be such, as the end of your New Year's Gift describes; even such as are earnest followers of good works.

If we will show ourselves to pertain unto Christ, to be his people, to be wholly addicted unto him, we must be earnest followers of good works; we may not linger, loiter, nor play the idle lubbers; we must work earnestly, and, as the Kentish men say, "a good." For Christ hath redeemed us from all unrighteousness, not that we should continue still in our old wickedness and ungodly conversation, but that we should be his peculiar people, chosen out to serve him, and to work his most godly pleasure; again, that we should be earnest followers of good works.

And here is answer to be made to those who say, If Christ hath redeemed me from all unrighteousness, made me clean by his blood from all my sins, purchased freely by his death for me eternal life, and made a perpetual agreement between God the Father and me, what need I to work? What can my works profit, what shall my labours avail me? Christ hath done enough for me; Christ is my sufficient Saviour; Christ hath made all things so perfect that nothing can be added thereto. Therefore, let us be merry and take no thought. O filthy swine and careless dogs! Because Christ hath done that for them which they could not do for themselves, behold, how willingly they cast themselves into hell-fire! Who treadeth the blood of Christ under his feet, if these belly-gods do it not? Who defaceth the price of Christ's death, and the glory of his resurrection, if these filthy swineheads do it not? But let them well know, that they have no part of Christ, of Christ's passion, blood, and death, nor yet of any of all his merits, so long as they continue in this their wicked and very detestable purpose; boast they never so much of Christ, of Christ's blood, of faith, of the gospel, of the Christian liberty, &c. They shall go to the devil headlong without any mercy, for all Christ, Christ's blood, faith, gospel, Christian liberty, and whatsoever they can allege more, if they have time and convenient leisure to do good works, and yet will not. Who was ever saved without good works, having opportunity to work?

Ye object and lay against me the thief on the cross.

But what leisure* had he to work? Neither do I know whether that way of health was ever preached unto him, or not, although he was not utterly void of good works. For he, being at the point of death, bewailed his wretchedness, lamented his sinful manners, confessed his wickedness, repented him of his abominable living, turned to Christ, acknowledged him to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, and desired Christ to remember him when he came into his kingdom.† If this man had had leisure, undoubtedly he would have showed forth his repentance and faith, by doing external good works. Therefore the example of him helpeth nothing your sluggish and dissolute manner of living, who have both read and heard Christ many times preached to you, and yet are ye never the better. Only ye persuade yourselves well of Christ and Christ's merits, but all in vain. For he is no Saviour to those sinners who live without all fear of God; but to such as repent, believe, and labour earnestly to bring forth good works, from the number of which ye seem to be no less far than the west is from the east. Christ hath redeemed us, saith the Scripture, that we should be his people, and earnest followers of good works. We must be his people, and earnest followers of good works, or else have we no redemption by Christ, as John Chrysostom witnesseth. Neither baptism, saith he, nor forgiveness of sins, nor knowledge, nor the communion of the sacraments, nor the holy table, nor the fruition of the body, nor the partaking of the blood, nor any of these things, shall or may be able to profit us, except we have a life which is right, very pure, yea and free from all sin. What will these idle lubbers say to these words of the golden-mouthed doctor? Where are all their proud boasts of Christ, his blood and merits? All these profit nothing at all without a good life.

Ch. It is necessary then for Christian men to be earnest followers of good works.

Ph. Ye say truth—especially if they intend to be saved. But let us hear the Scriptures. When God promised Abraham, that he would bless them that did bless him, and curse them that did curse him, and that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed, and that he would multiply his seed as the stars of the firmament, and make

* Opportunity.

† And reproved his blaspheming companion.

him a father of many nations, and that he would be his defender and his sufficient great reward, he made a covenant with him because he would have him show gentleness again, and said, I am the God omnipotent, walk before me and be perfect. As though he should say, I am the God almighty, all sufficient, all good, all holy, all righteous, all wise, all liberal, all plenteous, all merciful, and have need of nothing; but freely give to all men, all things, whatsoever are necessary either for the body or for the soul; and I am so replenished with all things that I am able and sufficient in all points to satisfy the lawful desires of all creatures; yea, I have all things so in my power, that nothing that is good can be given to any man, but of me alone; and whatsoever I am or have, it is for the profit of thee and of thy posterity. Only walk before me, and be perfect, take me alone for thy all sufficient Saviour; fly unto no other, as though there were in me a certain insufficiency, but cleave to me alone with all thy heart; attempt nothing but that which is pleasant in my sight; order thy life in all points according to my holy will; let thy conversation be innocent, blameless, pure, honest, right, and all good; and so will I be thine Almighty God, thy puissant defender, and thy sufficient great reward. This covenant hath God made not only with Abraham, but also with all his posterity, that is, so many as are faithful. Now if we are of the seed of Abraham, (I speak of the spiritual and not of the carnal generation,) then God requires of us also, that we walk before him and be perfect; that we steadfastly cleave unto him by strong faith, as the only and sole author of all goodness; and so institute our life, that we may breathe nothing but purity, innocency, holiness, and integrity, all the time of our life in this world. Thus doing, God will be our God, yea, our Almighty God, our strong defender, and our sufficient great reward, no less than he was Abraham's. Therefore as Abraham walked before God, so let us do. By this means shall God be no less beneficial to us than he was to Abraham. If ye were the sons of Abraham, saith Christ, ye would do the works of Abraham.

I will hasten unto the other Scriptures. When St. John Baptist saw many of the pharisees and sadducees coming unto his baptism, he said unto them, O ye generation of vipers, who hath showed you that ye should flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of

repentance, and be not of this mind, to say within yourselves, Abraham is our father, for I say unto you, that God is able to bring it to pass, that of these stones there may rise up children to Abraham. The axe is now laid at the root of the tree; therefore every tree that bringeth forth not good fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Th. This is a terrible saying for all those who are not earnest followers of good works.

Ph. Certainly, as it profited the pharisees and sadducees, with the other Jews, nothing at all to boast themselves of Abraham, except they did the works of Abraham, so likewise it advantages us nothing at all, to boast of God, of Christ's blood, sufferings, merits, faith, &c. if we do not good works. This sentence abideth always true: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire. If we are not like unto those trees which are planted by the river's side, and bring forth their fruit in due season, surely we shall be hewn up and cast into hell fire. For how dare we look for any kindness at the hand of God, and do nothing that he commandeth. David saith, I being as a fruitful olive tree in the house of God, have trusted in the mercy of God for evermore. David confesses here that he trusted in the mercy of God, but he adds, that he was in the house of God, that is to say, the congregation of Christ, as a fruitful olive tree, which, as Pliny writes, is never without green leaves and fruit. So if we will be holpen by the mercy of God, we must be as fruitful olive trees, and bring forth plenty of good works, and never cease from doing them, or else our hope and trust are but vain.

Christ saith, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. For many shall say unto me at that day, Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils by thy name, and wrought many miracles through thy name? But then shall I say unto them, I know you not, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. Here are we taught that to profess God with our mouths, to call upon his name, to talk of Christ, of faith, of the gospel, and of all the divine mysteries; yea, to work miracles and to cast out devils by the power of Christ's name, shall avail nothing at the day of judgment, except we lead a good life in this world, and

work the good pleasure of God. For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power, saith St. Paul. He that hath my commandments, saith Christ, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. If any man loveth me, he will keep my word, and my Father shall love him, and we will come unto him and dwell with him. He that loveth not me, keepeth not my words. Here Christ measures the love that we have towards him, by keeping his word. If we keep his word, then we love him, but if we keep it not, then we love him nothing at all. Again, he saith, I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit. Let us not flatter ourselves. If we abide in Christ, we bring forth much fruit. If we bring forth no fruit, then abide we not in Christ. If we abide not in Christ, then are we none of Christ's. So it follows, that as withered branches we shall be gathered and cast into the fire, and there burn for ever. St. Paul saith, Not they which hear the law are righteous before God, but they that express the law in deeds shall be counted righteous. Although no man is able, so long as he lives in this world, to fulfil the law, so thoroughly as the purity thereof requires, yet is it our office to labour unto the uttermost of our power to fulfil the law. And where we perceive that we are not able to bring to pass, with so great cleanness of heart, that which the spirit of the law requires, we are to bewail our weakness, to desire strength, and to pray unto God that Christ, who is the end and perfect fulfilling of the law, may supply that which is wanting in us. Again he saith, We are buried with him by baptism into death, that as Christ is risen again from death by the glory of the Father, so we should walk in a new life. And a little after, Account yourselves to be dead unto sin, but living unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore let not sin reign in your mortal body, for to obey it through the lusts thereof. Neither give ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but give yourselves unto God, as they that are alive from death, and give your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Again, in that same chapter, As ye have given your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even from one iniquity unto another, so now give your members servants unto righteousness, that ye may be sanctified.

All these sentences declare unto us, how pure, innocent,

and faultless our living ought to be. If it be the contrary, our profession profits us nothing at all. In another place also he saith, If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, that is to say, wholly changed from his old manners unto new. He hath no more fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but so composes and appoints his living, that he may appear to be the light of the world. Again, they that are of Christ, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof. If we live in the Spirit let us walk in the spirit. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. All they therefore who live according to the appetite, lust, and desire of the flesh, pertain not unto Christ. We are the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them. Behold God is our Maker, and we are made anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. So many therefore as apply not themselves to do good works, are not engrafted into Christ, but remain still members of Satan. Also, St. Paul saith to the Ephesians, I, being prisoner, exhort you in the Lord, that ye walk worthy your calling wherein ye are called; with all lowliness and meekness, with softness of mind, suffering one another by charity; studying to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Here we see with what virtues we ought to garnish our life, that we may walk worthy our vocation and calling. How far then are they out of the way, who defile themselves with all kinds of abominable vice. Be ye, saith St. Paul, the followers of God, as well beloved children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved us. If it be our duty to be the followers of God, so must we practise his goodness and follow his innocency and purity as much as lieth in our power, or else we are not the sons of God. Our celestial Father is pure and holy, and shall we his children be profane and unholy? Our heavenly Father is good, godly, merciful, patient, and all spirit, and shall we his sons be evil, wicked, rigorous, impatient, and all flesh? Be ye holy, saith he, for I am holy. Ye shall be perfect, saith Christ, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Moreover St. Paul writes, Be ye pure, and such as no man can be offended with you, against the day of Christ, filled full of the fruit of righteousness, which is through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Again, Do all things without grudging and disputation, being such that

no man can complain of you, and pure, the sons of God faultless in the midst of a froward and crooked nation, among whom shine ye as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life. It is not without a cause that your New Year's Gift teacheth us to be earnest followers of good works, seeing that so great purity and cleanness of life is required of us. Wo worth those filthy swine, which wallow and tumble themselves in all kind of fleshly uncleanness, unto the great slander of Christ's gospel. Also, Mortify your earthly members, whoredom, uncleanness, covetousness, &c. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto sanctification. All ye are the sons of light, saith he, and the sons of the day; we are not of the night, nor yet of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober. Seeing we are no more the world's, seeing also we have given over Satan and the flesh, with all their works, pomps, and pleasures, it becomes us to walk in all our life and conversation so that we be not found like Satan's servants, nor the voluptuous worldlings, nor yet any such as live after the flesh and not after the spirit, but pure, clean, honest, faultless, godly, and as I may so speak, even like another Christ. St. Peter also saith, Give not yourselves to your old lusts, wherewith ye were led, when ye knew not Christ; but as He that called you is holy, so be ye also holy in all your conversation, for it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. Here are we taught to forsake our old sinful living, and to fashion ourselves like unto the manners of God, who is holy, righteous, perfect, and abundantly good in all things.

Furthermore, St. John saith, If we say that we have fellowship with Christ, and yet walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, maketh us clean from all sin. This text proves manifestly that we have no fellowship with Christ, so long as we walk in darkness, that is, in sinful living; again, that the blood of Christ profits us nothing at all, except we walk in the light of God's word, and labour to fulfil his holy precepts. For, saith St. John, By this do we know that we have known Him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but he that

does his word truly, in him is the love of God perfect. By this do we know that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought to walk even as he walked. Of this and all other texts which I have hitherto rehearsed, we may easily learn what is our duty, and how earnestly we ought to seek occasions to do good.

Seeing we are the people of God, yea his peculiar and chosen people, we must needs show ourselves earnest followers of good works, or else have we no fellowship with Christ. God the Father is not our father, neither are we Christ's brothers, nor yet fellow-heirs with him, if we seek not to lead a godly and virtuous life. Let us never boast of the justification of faith, of the free mercy of God, of Christ's passion, blood, death, merits, &c., except we lead a life worthy the kindness of God: let us never rejoice that we are delivered from the power of Satan, sin, death, and hell, for so long as we continue in our old sinful living and wicked manners, we pertain not to Christ, but are the bondslaves of Satan, and very firebrands of hell. For as the good priest Zacharias, father to John the Baptist, saith, God hath performed the oath, which he sware to our father Abraham, for to give us, that we, delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness. Hereto agrees the saying of St. Paul, The blood of Christ who, through the everlasting Spirit, hath offered himself pure to God, shall purge your conscience from dead works for to serve the living God. Here we learn that Christ hath delivered us from the power of our enemies, that we should serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. Now if any is not given to the service of God, surely he is not free, but abideth still the miserable captive and bond-prisoner of his enemies. Let all men, therefore, take heed and prepare themselves to lead a godly life, that they may be earnest followers of good works, or else neither their baptism, nor Christ, nor yet any thing that ever Christ did, shall profit them anything at all.

Ch. Oh, how greatly are many deceived, who put their trust in Christ, and boast much of faith, and yet continue still abominable livers, thinking to be saved, notwithstanding all this their great wickedness.

Ph. To repentance, faith, and amendment of life, mercy is never denied. But be not you deceived, neighbours,

for not they which hear the law are righteous before God, but they that express the law in deeds, shall be counted righteous. Be ye the doers of the word and not the hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Th. God give us grace thus to do, that we may garnish* the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Ph. Verily, there are many causes, and those urgent and necessary, why Christian men should bring forth good works, if they considered their vocation and calling well. First, because it is the will of God, and God hath commanded so by his holy word. For what child accomplishes not his father's will, for the love that he bears toward him? What servant fulfils not his master's commandments if he do but only fear him? How much more then ought we, who have so loving a Father, and so puissant a Lord, and beneficial a Master, for the love and reverent fear that we bear towards him, to show ourselves obedient to his holy will, and fulfil it to the uttermost of our power? Where either fear or love of God is, there must the fulfilling of God's law needs follow. If it doth not, never let us confess ourselves either to fear or love God truly. The son honoureth his father, and the servant his lord. If I then be your Father, where is my honour? And if I be your Lord, where is my fear, saith the Lord of Hosts? Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, saith Christ, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. The holy Scripture commands us to repent, and to bring forth fruits of repentance. And Christ saith, As my Father gave me commandment, so I do. Again, I have not spoken of myself, but he that sent me, that is to say, my Father, he gave me commandment what I should do, and what I should speak. A christian man, therefore, must do good, because it is the commandment and will of God.

Secondly, we ought to do good works, that God may be glorified through them; as Christ saith, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Also, St. Peter, See that ye have an honest conversation among the heathen; that they which backbite you as evil doers, may see your good works, and praise God in the day of visitation. For what greater dishonour can there be done to God, than to profess the name of God, and ignominiously

*Adorn.

to deface and obscure the glory of it, through our wicked and ungodly conversation? Their rulers do unrighteously, saith the Lord, and by this means my name is blasphemed continually, even all the whole day long. St. Paul also saith, The name of God is evil reported for you among the heathen. Again, what greater honour can there be given to God of us, than to lead a godly life, and to express the manners and living image of our heavenly Father in all our life. By the one, God is dishonoured; by the other, he is greatly honoured, praised, and magnified.

Thirdly, it is our duty to do good works, that we may be certain that our faith is right, true, lively, and working. For as there is not a more certain argument and sure token that a tree is good, than by bringing forth good fruit, so there is not a better proof that our faith is true and Christian, than when we work the will of God, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. When we work the will of God, and fashion our life according to the rule of Christ's gospel, then may we be certain that our faith is right, and that we are the sons of God, and fellow-inheritors with Jesus Christ. Neither need we doubt of anything that God has promised in his Holy Scriptures, but believe steadfastly that we shall have all things according to his promises, inasmuch as we bring forth the fruits of faith. But if we live still carnal and do the filthy works of the flesh, as drunkenness, whoredom, theft, covetousness, &c., then have we no cause to rejoice, nor yet to boast of our faith. For the true faith worketh great and marvellous things, as we may see in Abraham, who truly believed in God, and therefore wrought many godly works. He obeyed the word of God; he left his own native country; he was contented at the commandment of God to kill and offer his own son; and to do whatsoever the Spirit of God moved him to do. Of this nature are so many as truly believe. They that work not thus, have not Abraham's faith, neither are they the sons of Abraham. For Christ said to the Jews, If ye were the sons of Abraham, ye would do the works of Abraham. Therefore, after that we are persuaded of the goodness of God toward us, and believe faithfully, that God, for his promises' sake, which he hath made us in Christ's blood, will be bounteous and merciful unto us, we must note that the Scripture commands works to be done of the faithful. For after that we are once justified by faith before God, we must

express that faith, which is known to God alone, by external and outward works, that we may appear righteous both before God and man. Neither is there any better sign, or more manifest argument, as I said before, that our faith is right, true and lively, than when it produces and brings forth good works; even as there is not a more manifest probation that a tree is good, than by bringing forth good fruit. A faithful man, therefore, is not compared without cause, by the psalmist, to a tree planted by the river's side, which bringeth forth her fruit in due season. I, being like a fruitful olive tree, saith David, in the house of God, have trusted in the mercy of God for ever and ever. A Christian man is compared to a green olive, for he is ever full of fruit and never barren, always green and never scar, ever working and never idle. He that truly believeth, hath no need of laws to compel him to do good works, as the Scripture saith, The law is not given unto a righteous man, but unto the unrighteous and disobedient, &c. For of his own free will (so lively and mighty in operation is faith) when God giveth an occasion, he will bring forth good works, even the fruit of faith, unto the glory of God and the health of his neighbour. The sons of God are not content to sit idle, saith Chrysostom, but the Spirit provoketh them to take some great and commendable work in hand. Hereto agreeth the saying of Gregory, The love of God is never idle, for it worketh great things, if it be the love of God indeed, but if it cease to work, then is it no love. The unfaithful is like unto a dead stock, which brings forth no fruit at all, but is unprofitable altogether, and therefore shall he be hewn down, and cast into hell fire. To be short in this matter, they that are fruitful and bring forth good works, pertain unto the church of God; and they who are unfruitful, and bring forth no good works, belong unto the church of the devil, (for there is a double church,*) and shall be cursed as the fig-tree was.

Fourthly, we ought to do good works, that we may win our neighbours also unto Christ. As St. Peter writes, You wives, be obedient to your husbands, that they also which obey not the word, may be won by the conversation of their wives without the word, while they consider your chaste and pure conversation, joined with reverence. For

* Two Churches; the Church of Christ and the congregation of Satan.

as Christ came not into this world to win the favour of his eternal Father for himself, but whatsoever he did, was done for us; so in like manner, whatsoever we do, we must do it also for our neighbours, to win them unto Christ, to make them professors of Christ's gospel, and the perfect children of God our Father. Let the same affection be in you, saith St. Paul, that was in Christ Jesus; who being in the shape of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Nevertheless he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and became like unto men, and was found in the figure as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross.

Fifthly, we must do good works, that the mouths of the ungodly may be stopped, as St. Peter saith, This is the will of God, that by well doing, ye should stop the mouths of ignorant and foolish persons. St. Paul saith, Do all things without murmuring and disputing, that ye may be faultless and pure, and the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom see that ye shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life. Verily, if it were ever expedient that Christian men should lead a godly life, it is at this time most necessary. For when the adversaries of God's truth see those who profess the gospel of Christ live dissolutely, not fast, not pray, not give alms, not mortify the affections of the flesh, but lead a more ungodly life than the other sort do; then they blaspheme the gospel, then they call the word of God heresy, then they hate exceedingly, persecute, imprison, condemn, and utterly destroy so many as cleave purely to the doctrine of Christ. And all this comes to pass through the wickedness and ungodly conversation of the gross* gospellers, the railing readers of the Scripture, the jay-like janglers of God's word, and brainless babblers of the gospel, who babble much of God's truth, and yet live no part thereof. Oh what a great hinderance is this to God's most holy word! God give us grace both to love and live the gospel.

Finally, we ought to do good works, seeing it is no unprofitable service, neither shall our labour be lost in so doing, but we shall be highly rewarded for doing of them, not only in this world, but much more plenteously in the world to come. Rejoice and be glad, saith Christ, to all that do good works, for great is your reward in heaven.

* Carnal.

Again, He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, he shall receive the reward of a prophet. And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, he shall receive the reward of a righteous man. And whosoever shall give to one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. Also in another place, Whosoever shall give to you a cup of cold water to drink in my name because ye are of Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. Every man shall bear his own burden. All of us must stand openly before the judgment place of Christ, that every one may receive according to that which he did when he was alive, whether it be good or evil. Christ the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he give to every one according to their works. The hour cometh, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of Christ, and they that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. To them that have done the works of mercy, shall everlasting glory be given at the day of judgment; and to the unmerciful, eternal damnation. So that they which do good works in this world, shall receive a glorious and everlasting reward in the world to come. Of this had St. Paul a certain assurance when he said, I have fought a good fight, I have fulfilled my course, and have kept the faith; from henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord who is a righteous judge shall give me at that day, not to me only, but unto all them that love his coming. Thus much have I spoken concerning good works; and here have ye now your New Year's Gift complete and perfect.

Th. Blessed be God for this our New Year's Gift, which is more precious than gold, pearls, and precious stones. May God give you a heavenly gift for this your New Year's Gift, wherewith this day you have enriched us.

Ph. The Christian love and tender affection wherewith I love you all, has moved me to do that which I have done. If I have done you any pleasure to the rejoicing of your spirits, I am glad. If I have not in all points satisfied your desire and expectation, yet accept my good will. For he is not altogether to be blamed, who intendeth well, although all things do not thoroughly answer to his intent.

Well neighbours, I will now knit up in few words, that which I have spun in many, and show you briefly the whole effect of your New Year's Gift. Ye have learned that Christ is the gift of God, freely given you of God the Father for your New Year's Gift. So that not only He, but all that ever he hath, inasmuch as he is man, is ours. His fasting, watching, praying; his mercy, goodness, purity, innocency; his passion, blood, death, resurrection, and all that ever he hath besides—All is ours. God hath given us all things with him, as St. Paul saith. This gift of God, Christ, our New Year's Gift, hath appeared, no more by types, figures, clouds, and shadows, but in his flesh. He hath taken flesh of the most holy and pure virgin, Mary, and is become very man for our sake, like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. And that we may know that he is a precious gift unto us, he bringeth health unto all men, not only unto the Jews, but also to the Gentiles; so that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord, he shall be saved, be he Jew or Gentile, free or bond, noble or ignoble; for he is the only Saviour. None saveth but he alone; neither is there any salvation but in him alone, nor yet any name given unto men under heaven, wherein they must be saved, but in his name alone.

Moreover ye have learned that he is not only a Saviour, and bringeth salvation to all men, but he is also a schoolmaster unto us. For he teaches us first that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and afterwards live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Whatsoever vice hath reigned in us in times past, we must now utterly put it away from us, were it idolatry, false worshipping of God, superstition, confidence in ceremonies, despising of God's word, swearing by his most blessed name, breaking of the Sabbath-day, &c.; or else uncleanness, carnal affections, worldly lusts, devilish motions, whoredom, theft, covetousness, drunkenness, gluttony, wrath, contention, bloodshedding, &c., and garnish our lives with all kind of virtues, sobriety, justice, godliness, purity, innocency, patience, long suffering, charity, peace, goodness, faith, temperance, meekness, and with all the other fruits of the Spirit; that with good consciences and free hearts, we may look for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who willingly and without any compulsion gave, no angel nor man, but himself for us, to redeem us

from all unrighteousness—that is to say from all sin, both original, mortal, venial, or any other—so that we repent, believe, ask mercy, and amend our sinful living; and to purge us a peculiar people unto himself, to do him service and none other; and even such as without any feigned or cloaked holiness, should be earnest followers, not of their own wills, fancies, and fleshly pleasures, but of good works, even such works as God commandeth and are accepted before him, and not such as dame Good-intent and her sister Blind-zeal imagine and invent of their own brains without the authority of God's word.

Thus have ye, neighbours, in few words, that which ye received before in many. What now remaineth, but that, seeing God the Father hath showed us so great kindness by his Son Jesus Christ, we do as the New Year's Gift teaches us, that is to say, deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and be earnest followers of good works, that we may, with a good conscience and joyful heart, look for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Remember then, that to be called a Christian man availeth nothing, except we live according to our name and profession. Remember that to read the Scriptures, and to have the knowledge of them, profiteth nothing at all, except we fashion our life according to the doctrine thereof. Remember that to boast of faith and of our justification by it, is nothing to the purpose, except we bring forth the fruits of faith. Remember that to glory of our salvation purchased by Christ availeth nothing, except we change our old living and become new men. Remember that all the benefits of Christ serve only for those who repent, believe, and lead a godly and innocent life. All others, as they have no part in Christ, so they remain still the bond-captives of Satan, and shall, if they amend not, be committed to hell fire for evermore. Therefore, neighbours, take heed, refuse not to walk in the light of God's word. Walk while ye have light, lest darkness overwhelm you. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. While ye have time do good unto all men. Night shall come when no man shall be able to work. Now is the time of grace, now is the time of health. Therefore, neighbours, stand not idle all day; work manfully in the Lord's vineyard. Be not like unto that unprofitable servant, who hid up the treasure of

his master in the ground, lest ye be cast into the outer darkness, where weeping and gnashing of teeth shall be; but apply the talent that ye have received, unto the glory of God and the profit of your neighbour. Be not barren and unfruitful as the fig-tree was, lest ye also be cursed. Be not like the five foolish virgins, who had lamps and no oil in them, and therefore they could not enter into the marriage feast with the bridegroom, but were barred out. Be not like the gross and unthankful Jews, who, when they were delivered out of Egypt, the house of bondage, desired to be there again among the greasy flesh pots. Be not like to Lot's wife who looked back unto the filthy people of Sodom. But be like unto Christ, and so many as are followers of him; as St. Paul saith, Be ye the followers of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Cor. xi.) Be earnest followers of good works. Walk worthy the gospel of Christ, and so show yourselves faithful in all things, that ye may garnish the doctrine of God our Saviour. What should I say more unto you? Be faithful unto the death, that the crown of life may be given unto you. For he that continueth unto the end, he shall be safe.

And here also I make an end, desiring you, by the tender mercies of God, and by the precious blood of Jesus Christ our Saviour, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain, but so behave yourselves in all things, as it becometh the servants of God. So may ye be sure to receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to so many as love him. Amen.

Now, neighbours, here have ye your New Year's Gift, although homely, yet godly. If it had lain in my power to have given you better, better you should have had. But I pray you accept my good will for this time. If God at another time give me better, be ye sure that you shall not want your part of it.

Eu. Neighbour Philemon, we thank you right heartily; and we again unto the utmost of our power, give both ourselves and all that ever we have unto you, not only to desire, but also to your commandment.

Ph. I know the good hearts of you all toward me. I pray you vouchsafe to come with me into my hall, and we will be joyful together in God, as the time of the year and common custom require.

Th. We follow you gladly. Blessed be God for our New Year's Gift.

Give the glory to God alone.

The following is a brief account of Becon's tracts, entitled "The Christmas Banquet," and "The Pleasant Nosegay," which contain much that is excellent, although intermixed with many of the quaint peculiarities of the times in which they were written.

The Christmas Banquet,

Garnished with many and dainty dishes.

This is a dialogue between Philemon and his neighbours, in which he sets before them "a Christmas Banquet to sustain and feed their hungry souls with the word of God." The first dish is, (Gen. iii. 17, 18,) *Cursed is the earth in thy work. It shall bring forth unto thee thorns and brambles.* From hence Becon shows that the sin of Adam is the cause of man's condemnation, which he proves by many passages of scripture. The second dish is, (Gen. iii. 15,) *I will set enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and that same seed shall tread down thy head.* This shows God's free mercy towards man, and how all good things are given to us for Christ's sake, who is the beginning and ending of all our salvation. The third dish is, (Mark i. 15,) *Repent and believe the gospel.* Becon here shows what is repentance, what it worketh in man—that repentance and faith must be joined together—and that faith in Christ alone saveth. The fourth dish is, (Ephesians ii. 10,) *We are the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them.* Here is shown, what is the duty of the faithful—that good works are commanded by God, and that true faith in Christ is the mother of all good works.

The pleasant new Nosegay,

Full of many godly and sweet flowers, lately gathered.

This tract also is a dialogue between Philemon and his friends, in which he presents them with "a nosegay full of most redolent and odoriferous flowers, which may expel all pernicious and hurtful savours, and conserve and keep health both of body and mind." The first flower is called Unfeigned Humility, (1 Peter v. 5,) *Have humility and lowliness of mind engrafted in you. For God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace.* Hence is shown that pride is the headspring of evil. The second is Pure Innocency, (Gen. xvii. 1, 2,) *I am the almighty God. Walk before me and be perfect; and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee beyond all measure.* From this is shown the duty of man towards God. The third flower is Faithful Obedience, (Rom. xiii. 1,) *Let every soul be subject to the powers that bear rule, &c.* Thence is enforced obedience to the lawful authorities. The fourth flower is called Ready Assistance, (Phil. ii. 4,) *Let every man look not for his own profit, but for the profit of others.* Thence is shown our duty towards our neighbour. The fifth is Christian Charity, (1 John iii. 18,) *Let us not love in word or tongue, but in work and truth.* From thence Becon shows the effects of love to God and to our neighbour.

These tracts contain many excellent and pithy observations, and especially show that Becon was a man "mighty in the scriptures."

AN INVECTIVE

AGAINST

THE MOST WICKED AND DETESTABLE VICE

OF

SWEARING.

Extract from the Preface.

I EXHORT all men charitably to admonish one another, when they see any offend, and to rebuke him by the Scriptures, that we may shine in the midst of a froward and crooked nation, as great lights in the world, pure, faultless, and such as no man can complain of, holding fast the word of life. (Phil. ii.) Let us suffer no sin to reign in this our mortal body, (Rom. vi.) but mortify all things that strive against the Spirit. Let us hate, detest, and abhor sin as the most grievous pestilence and pestiferous poison that can befall us. But above all things, LET US NOT SWEAR at all, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor yet by anything that is contained in them. (Matt. v. James v.) If any of us at any time shall hear another swear, and pollute the name of our Lord God by vain, idle, and unlawful oaths, let us charitably admonish the offender, exhort him to cease from his swearing, and move him unto the praise of God, and of his most holy and blessed name. For surely if there were no more sins committed in England, than the blaspheming of God and his creatures by vain swearing, it were enough to bring final destruction unto this realm; from the which I beseech God long to preserve it, and to give the inhabitants thereof grace to correct and amend their sinful manners. And to the intent that men may know how great an offence it is before God, vainly to swear, I have made this Invective against swearing, wherein as in a clear mirror they shall unfeignedly perceive and see, what great damnation hangeth over the heads of all swearers, and that it is not possible for them to escape the vengeance of God, except with all haste they repent, forsake their detestable manner of swearing, and earnestly fall into the hearty praises of God.

THE

INVECTIVE AGAINST SWEARING.

A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with wickedness, and the plague, that is to say, the vengeance of God, shall not go away from his house.—Eccl. xxiii.

Whence shall I take my beginning, while I lament the corrupt manners of this most wretched world, more aptly and fitter for the purpose than from the prophet Jeremiah, and with weeping tears and sorrowful heart cry out with him, Oh! who shall give my head water enough and a well of tears for mine eyes, that I may weep night and day for the slaughter of my people. (Jer. ix.) The prophet doth not here bewail them that have their bodies slain with the sword, or with any other kind of violence; but he lamenteth the wretched and damnable state of such as are slain in their souls, by the multitude of sins. For whatsoever the sword is to the body, even the very same is sin to the soul, as manifestly appears by his words that follow. For he calleth them adulterers, and a company of wicked transgressors. They bend their tongues like bows, saith he, to shoot out lies. As for the truth they cannot endure it. For they go from one wickedness unto another, and hold nothing of God. They are so false and crafty, that every one had need to keep himself from another. No man may safely trust his own brother, for one brother undermines another, and one neighbour beguiles another, yea, one dissembles with another, and they deal with no truth. They have practised their tongues to speak lies, and have taken great pains to do mischief. They have set their stool in the midst of deceit, and for very dissembling falsehood they will not know the Lord. Their tongues are like sharp arrows to speak deceit, with their mouth they speak peaceably to their neighbours, but privily they lay wait for him.

These words of the prophet declare evidently that he bewailed them that are slain in their souls by reason of the manifold wickedness wherewith they are wounded inwardly and slain, that is to say, cast away from the favour

of God, and condemned unto perpetual death, except they repent, believe, and amend. So likewise I, at this time using the words of the prophet, do not lament such as have tasted the death of the body, and are gone; but them that are yet alive in this world as concerning their bodies, but dead through sin as touching their souls. These I lament, these I bewail, these I sorrow and sigh for, both day and night. These make me to lay aside all mirth and joy, and to walk as one desolate and comfortless. These cause me to wish that I, being only one, and a private person, might be banished, yea, cursed from Christ, so that so great a multitude might be saved. My faith is that I am written in the book of life, and numbered among the vessels of mercy; yet notwithstanding, would God I might be wiped out, so that these who are slain in the soul through sin, might be saved. (Rom. ix.) What one man having but a kernel of Christian salt in his breast wishes not so? Who desires not rather, being one person, to be damned, than so great a number should perish? What need I rehearse here the tender affection of Moses, Christ, and Paul, which they bare towards the salvation of others, whom we all ought to follow. (Exod. xxxii. Phil. ii. Rom. ix.) Moses when the Israelites had offended God for worshipping of the golden calf, prayed for them on this manner, Forgive them, O Lord, this fault, or else wipe me out of the book wherein thou hast written me. Christ, by the prophet, saith, Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for it, that I have not done? (Isa. v.) St. Paul wished himself to be banished from Christ, for his brethren and kinsfolk according to the flesh, which are the Israelites. (Rom. ix.) Certainly he is no Christian man, that provideth for his own salvation, and cares not for the health of others. God, saith Chrysostom, (Hom. vii. in Genesi.) will not that a Christian should be contented with himself alone, but that he also edify others, not by teaching only, but by living and conversation also. Charity, saith Paul, seeketh not her own. (1 Cor. xiii.) Again, Let no man seek his own, but the profit of others. (Phil. ii.) This made all the holy fathers in times past to be so desirous of the health of others, that they wished, even with the loss of their own health, the salvation of their Christian brothers. Who, being of their mind, and godly inspired, wishes not the same at this time? For even as the prophet Jeremiah lamented the wickedness of the peo-

ple who lived at that time, even so, I am sure, do so many as are godly-minded lament the ungodliness that reigns among us at this day.

For consider what sins and how manifold reigned at that time, even the very same with a great heap more, reign, yea, and triumph in these our days, so greatly hath wickedness prevailed, and got the uppermost hand. If I should descend and go down into the great ocean and main sea, which overflows the whole world with the abundance of all evils, so should I never be able to sail and pass through. I will therefore at this time take upon me only to search the separate sea of one sin, although it may seem to be both great, large, broad, deep, bottomless, and not able to be sailed through of any man; and I will show how many dangers and grievous perils abide them that presume to pass in that cruel and fierce sea. And this sin is the most wicked and detestable vice of SWEARING, which now reigns so greatly in every place, that I fear all admonitions, exhortations, warnings, and counsels are frustrate and vain, so evil is a naughty and perverse custom, so rare a thing is it to heal that disease, which is rooted in the bone. Notwithstanding, although some peradventure shall laugh at this my labour, as a song sung to them that are deaf-eared; yet, forasmuch as my trust is, that all who are entangled with this vice are not of a desperate mind, nor so overwhelmed with the waves of this unmerciful sea, but that they may be called again and brought unto amendment; even for their sake and to win their souls unto glory, will I speak somewhat in this matter, and declare how greatly the abominable sin of swearing is to be detested and abhorred of every true Christian heart.

Therefore I shall most entirely desire all faithful and Christian people that shall read this my work, to mark diligently whatsoever they shall here find, and to repose it in the bottom of their hearts, as a grave and weighty matter pertaining unto the health of their souls. If any man will not amend after this our admonition, his damnation will fall upon his own head; for I am free from his blood, and have done my duty in this behalf.

OF PROFANE OATHS.

After that God had brought his people the Israelites out of Egypt, minding to institute and appoint a new pub-

lic weal, that should be governed after his device and appointment, he ordained certain ceremonies and ordinances which they should observe, and by the observance thereof show and outwardly declare their obedient heart toward him. Among all others, for the right institution of their life he gave them, by his servant Moses, ten commandments, which they might by no means transgress, except they would fall into his great displeasure, wrath, and indignation. (Deut. xxviii.) To the keepers of these commandments he promised all good, fortunate, and prosperous things; but to the transgressors and such as break them, he threatened all troublous, grievous, and painful things, as we may see in the books of Moses, and of the other prophets.

Among others he gave a commandment, which is this, "THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THY LORD GOD IN VAIN: FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN." As though he should say, Behold, I am the Lord thy God, which have done thee many great and singular pleasures. I have made thee like unto mine own similitude, likeness, and image. (Gen. iii.) I have preserved thee from eternal damnation, unto which thou hadst made thyself bound, through the offence of thy first father Adam, which he committed in Paradise. (see Rom. v.) I have nourished thee hitherto. I have sent thee thy health, and saved thee from all dangers. And now at the last, even of my own mere mercy and free goodness, I have delivered thee out of Egypt, the land of servitude and extreme bondage, and out of the hands of thy most cruel and unmerciful enemy Pharaoh. I feed thee with meat from heaven; I give thee drink out of the hard and stony rock; and now I haste with all power to lead thee into the land of the Canaanites, even such a land as floweth with milk and honey, and aboundeth with all good things, where (thine enemies cast out before thy face) thou shalt live and reign, like a most wealthy prince and ruler of the earth. Look therefore that thou keep my commandments and ordinances. Hear my voice; fly the voices of strangers. Look thou have none other gods besides me. Take me for thine own and only God. Fear, honour, and worship me alone. Love me with all thy heart, mind, strength, power, soul, &c. Hang on me. Seek for all good things at my hand. Believe me to be the God alone, who am all sufficient, plenteous to give, and in need

of nothing. Make thee no graven image unto the likeness of any thing in heaven, earth, or elsewhere. Do no reverence nor honour unto them. But above all things, look thou take not the name of me, thy Lord God in vain. For if thou so do, verily thou shalt not escape unpunished. I will be revenged of thy wickedness. For by no means will I suffer my name to be polluted and defiled with thine abominable and unlawful oaths. And that thou mayest take my name into thy mouth with honour, and reverence it when it is named, remember that I am a Lord, terrible in aspect, great in power, righteous in judgment, ready to take vengeance on the wicked, and such a one as am a consuming fire, and by no means can suffer iniquity. And as for the workers thereof, I hate, detest, and utterly abhor them. Again, thou art a miserable, wretched, and vile sinner, begotten, conceived, and born in sin, full of all filthiness, wicked in all thy thoughts, words, and deeds; deserving at every hour, by thine abominable living, to be cast into hell fire; were not I called away from taking vengeance, by my great mercy and long-suffering. What art thou then, O man, who, being so vile, wretched, sinful, and offensive, dost presume to take my name, who am King above all kings, and Lord above all lords, into thy polluted mouth, seeing it is a name that excelleth all others; seeing also that unto it every knee that is in heaven, earth, or hell, bow and give reverence,* again, seeing that the dignity, greatness, and virtue thereof can by no means be comprehended.

Use not therefore my name irreverently, but magnify and praise, honour, and worship it both day and night. Flee unto it as unto a strong bulwark and holy anchor in all thine adversity. Seek for remedy, aid, and succour of all thy diseases at my goodness. If thou dost otherwise, know that I am the living God, into whose hands it is a dreadful thing to fall. (Heb. x.) For I will visit thee with most grievous afflictions. I will punish thee with many intolerable diseases upon thy body in this world. I will smite thee, thy wife, thy children, thy cattle. All that ever thou hast, will I bring to nought. Of all men living will I make thee most vile and wretched. Whatsoever thou goest about shall not prosper, but come to an evil

* Job xxxvii. Exod. xvi. Deut. iv. Heb. xiii. Psal. vi. Matt. vii. Psal. l. Gen. vi. viii. Phil. ii.

end. So that in this world, my vengeance, that is to say, bodily plagues, shall fall upon thee, and after this present life, shalt thou without fail be cast into outer darkness, where weeping and gnashing of teeth shall be, where the fire shall never be quenched, where thy torments shall never have end, where the worm that gnaweth thy conscience shall never die. (Matt. xiii. Isaiah lxvi.)

Whose eyes send not forth large fountains of tears to hear these things? Yea, whose heart fainteth not for distilling of bloody tears, to hear so great and so grievous threats, yea, and that from the mouth of God, who is truth itself, who cannot lie, who is faithful in all his words? What man is so infected with the abominable sin of swearing as not now to tremble, shake, and quake for fear, to hear what grievous and intolerable pains abide him? Who hath an heart so indurated and hardened through the detestable and vicious custom of swearing, who is not now ready to cease from henceforth so wickedly to abuse the most holy and blessed name of God, and to honour, reverence, and worship it ever after? Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. God hath given ten commandments, yet only two of them have comminations and threats subjoined expressly, which are the second and the third; one for idolatry, the other for the unjust usurpation and unlawful using of the name of God; whereby he manifestly declares how great the sins of idolatry and of swearing are in his sight, above all other vices. Who is now so at defiance with the Christian religion, and so little esteems the glory of the most excellent name of God, that he will not cease from his wickedness of swearing, and learn from henceforth to glorify the most blessed name of God, if not for love, yet for fear of the most grievous and intolerable plagues that shall undoubtedly fall upon him? Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vain. God speaks these words with a marvellous great and vehement emphasis, because he would have us imprint this his precept in our memory. And because we should hearken the more unto it, he added a threat, and saith, For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. This is a grievous threat, and shakes all the parts of a Christian man's body, who is led with any fear towards God.

Now let us learn what it is to take the name of our Lord God in vain, that we fall not into that sin, and receive a reward worthy our wickedness.

To take the name of God in vain, is to call God to witness in unjust and trifling matters; vainly to swear by his most blessed name; to take it in our mouths without a necessary and urgent cause; and to obscure the glory of it through wicked and ungodly oaths. All they who thus do, shall not escape unpunished. How many are there at this time that transgress this holy precept of the Lord! How many call God a witness in unjust and trifling matters! How many pollute and defile (so far as they are able) the glory of God's most blessed name! How many swear continually, not only by God, and all that ever he made; again, not only by his dearly beloved Son our Lord and Saviour, but also (with honour and reverence I speak it) by all the holy members of his most glorious body! How common an oath now-a-days is, God's flesh, God's blood, God's heart, God's body, God's wounds; and all that ever may be rehearsed of God. Oh wickedness! Oh abomination! What part of Christ's most blessed body do these wicked and abominable swearers leave unrent and untorn! They are much worse than the Jews who cried, Away, away, crucify him, torment him, leave not one part whole of him; for they only cried upon Pilate to have him crucified, but these swearers themselves crucify him, rend and tear him. The Jews crucified him but once, and then their fury ceased; but these wicked caitiffs crucify him daily with their unlawful oaths, neither do their malice and cruelty cease at any time. Augustine (in Matt.) saith, "They sin no less who blaspheme Christ, now reigning in heaven, than they who crucified him walking on the earth." Yea, there are those who have so great pleasure in swearing, that they think themselves no men, unless they face, crack, and brag out their matters with large and shameless oaths. They judge it a point of elegance, civility, and good nurture to interlace their talk with abundance of oaths. They count him an ass, a dastard, and a hobby* of the country, that cannot swear valiantly; so greatly hath vice prevailed, so greatly hath wickedness rooted itself in the hearts of men, so little authority beareth virtue and godliness now-a-days in the world! The man

* Clownish, awkward fellow.

of business fears nothing at all to swear by God, and to call him as a witness in a vain and trifling matter, when he buys and sells anything, so that he may get a penny more by this means! But what doth it profit a man to win all the whole world, and to lose his own soul? How customably is this heard daily among them that are buyers and sellers,—"By God's soul, man, take it unto thee, and say not but that thou hast a friendly pennyworth; for, by the blessed body of God, thou hast it as good cheap, as ever I bought it!" And yet these are altogether stark lies! But let it be granted that their oaths were true, is it therefore convenient that in worldly matters, and for every light trifle, we should thus abuse the name of God which we ought never to have in our mouths without great reverence, and for urgent and weighty causes? There ought to be so great sincerity, faithfulness, truth, and singleness among Christian men, that yea, yea, nay, nay, should be sufficient; but alas there is so much craft, deceit, subtlety, falsehood, and doubleness, reigning in the world at this time, that none dare trust another, no, though they promise ever so fair, except they swear; no, nor then neither, except they have them bound in black and white,* as they say. Alas, unto what a point are we come, when all truth and credence are so far banished from the bounds of Christianity, that there is more faith and trust given to an obligation or such other trifle, than to the word and promise of a Christian man! It is even as the prophet saith, There is no truth upon the earth; but swearing, cursing, and lying. Every man is a liar. Every man that liveth is nothing but vanity, neither is there any trust in him. (Hosea iv. Psal. cix. Rom. iii.) Do ye think, saith Christ, that the Son of man shall find any faith on the earth, when he shall come? (Luke xviii.) Verily I think but little, which is an evident token that the day of the great and terrible judgment is not far off.

Moreover, how is God rent and torn by blasphemous oaths, not only among men in bargaining, buying and selling, chopping and changing, yea, but also in playing and idle matters! How will the dicer swear, rather than he will lose one cast! How will the card-player tear God in pieces rather than he will lose the profit of one card! How will they that stand by and behold, forswear themselves for the love that they bear to one of the parties!

* In writing.

Again, how deeply do men of law swear to their clients, that they have laboured their matters earnestly to the judges, when many times they have not spoken one word, but still prolong the matter that their advantage may be the greater! How doth the priest swear, that if it had not been for the love of such and such an honest man, and for the good report that he hath heard before of the parish, he would never have been parson of it! And yet it is not unknown that the most part of them love their parishioners so dearly, that after they are once sure of their benefice, they care not although they never see any of them after, so that they may have the advantage of the benefice; except, peradventure of their devotion, it be at harvest, when the tythe-barns are full, or else at Easter to search how good the Easter book will be that year! This once done, hence go they again, and leave a Sir John Lack Latin* in their stead, who teaches not much more than the hill moveth. The wolf may come, and easily rend, tear, and devour the poor sheep; for the shepherd hath gotten the milk and wool, and he is gone. (John x.) He hath gotten the fat from his parishioners' herds, and hath taken his journey, take thought for the flock who listeth. Oh shepherd and idol that thus forsaketh his flock! But alas! what consciences have these men, who take so much and do so little? If they will reap carnal things, so must they sow spiritual things, saith the Scripture. (1 Cor. ix.) The labouring ploughman, and not the idle lubber, must receive of the fruits, saith Paul. (2 Tim. ii.) They that rule well are worthy double honour, chiefly they that labour in word and doctrine. (1 Tim. v.) For the Lord hath ordained that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. Wo be to me, saith St. Paul, if I preach not the gospel. (1 Cor. ix.) Shall these men escape free, seeing they do nought, and yet receive so great fruit, commodities, and rewards? "What do we, O ye shepherds," saith St. Gregory. (Hom. vii.) "How may we be bold to receive wages, and yet be no workmen? We take the profits of holy church for our daily stipend, and yet do we labour nothing at all in preaching for the everlasting church! Let us consider and weigh what great damnation it is to take here the reward of labour, and to do nothing for it! Behold we live of the oblations of the faithful, but what do we labour for the souls of the faithful? We take for our stipends

* A common term for the ignorant Romish priests.

whatsoever the faithful bestow to redeem their sins, and yet do we not once show any diligence against those sins, either by the study of prayer or preaching." Let beneficed men, who give so little attendance upon Christ's flock, mark well the aforesaid words of the holy doctor, and consider with themselves whether they may justly receive so much, and do so little for it, or not. Again, the same doctor, (Dist. xviii. Cap. oportet,) saith, "The priests, to whom the Lord's people are committed, must watch with great diligence upon the Lord's sheep, that they be not rent and torn with the bitings of the wolf, that is to say, with the motions of the devil." God give them grace once to be priests and shepherds, not only in name and apparel, but also in work and truth.

Among serving men also, above all others, what wicked and detestable oaths are there heard! If there be any of that sort who fears God, and loves his word, and therefore abstains from vain oaths, how do his companions flout him! Look, what an ass is among a sort of apes, even the very same is he among his fellows! They think him not worthy to wear a sword and buckler* that cannot face out the matter with plenty of oaths. He that can swear best, and soonest give a blow, he is counted a hardy fellow, and fit to do a gentleman service; when, to say the truth, of all men, he is most a wretch and coward, and most of all unapt to do such a gentleman service as loveth God and his holy laws. Yea, such pestilent swearers and filthy blasphemers of God and his creatures, ought all honest and virtuous gentlemen to put out of their houses, lest they bring the vengeance of God upon their whole family,—wife, children, servants, and others. If they know that any man has been in the place where the plague reigneth, and would come into their houses, they bar the gates against him, they shut him out, by no means will they suffer him to enter. And why? Verily because they will not have the plague brought in among them, lest they should be infected and so die. Alas for pure pity! to die we are all born, and die we must at one time or other, whether it be by the plague or otherwise; and therefore it may seem that the death of the body ought not so greatly to be feared. Why then rather do they not put out of their houses these pestilent caitiffs, who, through their abominable swearing, infect all their family,

* Serving men in those days usually carried a sword and buckler.

not only their bodies, but their souls also; and provoke God to pour out his most fierce and grievous plagues upon them. Is not this the saying of the wise man, The man that useth much swearing shall be filled with iniquity and the plague, that is to say, the vengeance of God shall not go away from his house. Awake, therefore, O ye gentlemen, awake, and ye men of nobility awake; suffer no swearers in your houses; eschew them more than a venomous serpent, feed a dragon sooner in your house, than any such a one as hath pleasure in swearing. For as touching the one, it only hurts the body, the other destroys the bodies and souls of so many as are under you, and daily provokes the vengeance of God against you, and all that ever ye have in town, field, or elsewhere. He that toucheth pitch, saith the son of Sirach, shall be defiled with it; and he that keepeth company with them that are proud, shall learn pride. Likewise, they that accompany such as are swearers and blasphemers of God's most holy name, must needs prove like unto them, and therefore run into like condemnation. Away, therefore, with such out of your houses, except they will amend. Maintain none that shall bring the plague of God upon your house. Suffer not the tender breasts of your children to be poisoned in their young age with the pestilent and damnable communication of these abominable swearers. But above all things, look that ye yourselves have the name of God in so great reverence and honour, that by no means ye abuse it at any time by your vain oaths, to the evil example of your family.

Again, when the common sort of people in a parish are gathered together at any time, to make merry, as the custom in many places is to do, chiefly on the Sundays and other holy days, at afternoon, when they ought rather to be occupied in fervent prayers, or else in the reading or hearing of the Holy Scriptures, what shameful and wicked oaths do they swear! When they are once set upon the ale bench, and well whittled in their brains, through the many cups that have been filled in, how fall they then to swearing! What part of Christ's most blessed body is left untorn? He is taken for the jolliest fellow that can best swear. I let pass their other filthy talk, drunkenness, and excess. Oh wickedness! Are these Christian men? Not long before, they were in the temple, and full solemnly went up and down, pattering with a pair of beads in their hands, and when the priest

read the gospel, although they understood not one word,* yet, of custom, they stood up like men; and when the priest named Jesus in the gospel, and they saw him, for the reverence of it, make courtesy, they also full mannerly bowed their knees, as devout persons, pretending by that means that they have the name of Jesus among them in great honour; yet straightway go they unto the alehouse, and by their wicked oaths do they there the greatest dishonour to the name of Jesus that can be done in the world. These people may well be resembled to those Jews, who, in despite, stripped Christ, and put on him a purple robe, and plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand, and bowed their knees before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. God amend these crooked customs.

Furthermore, this damnable use of swearing hath so greatly prevailed among them that profess Christ, that it is also crept into the breast of young children. It is not a rare thing now-a-days to hear boys and mothers tear all the most blessed body of Christ with their blasphemous oaths. What marvel is it then though they be abominable swearers when they come to age? But whence learn they this? Verily of their parents and such as bring them up. Cursed be those parents who so behave themselves either in word or deed, that they give any occasion of evil at all unto their children. Great is their damnation. The blood of their children shall be required at their hands. Better were it for such fathers and mothers if they had a millstone tied about their necks, and so to be cast into the sea, than blasphemously to abuse the name of God unto the evil example of their children. Is it any marvel therefore though we be so greatly plagued, seeing the name of God is so much blasphemed among us now-a-days, by every degree and age? How can we be bold to say that we believe in God, when we live nothing according unto his word? With what forehead may we be bold to call upon the name of God in our adversity, seeing we, without all honour and reverence, do so shamefully abuse it with ungodly oaths? How can we hope that Christ's body was offered up to God the Father, a sweet-smelling sacrifice for our sins, (Eph. v.) when we so irreverently swear by it? How may we boldly say, that all our iniquities are washed away by Christ's blood, when we are not ashamed

* The Romish service is in Latin.

wiekedly to swear by it, and to obseure the virtue of it by our unlawful oaths, so mueh as lieth in our power? With what countenanee shall we be bold at the dreadful day of judgment, to behold and look upon the most glorious faee of the everlasting and righteous judge Christ, whose honour we have so oft defaeed with our vain and idle swearing? Undoubtedly these swearers and blasphemers of the name of God, are in a far worse ease than they appear before the world. The world, by reason of the long eustom and eontinuance thereof, think it no sin idly to swear; neither doth it judge them that are swearers to be in any worse ease than the other sort are; but the word of God judgeth otherwise of them; God's word deelares them to be the most grievous enemies of God, of his most blessed name, of Jesus Christ his Son, and of his most bitter passion. God's word deelares them to be the ehildren of wrath, fire-brands of hell, eaptives of Satan, and right heirs of eternal damnation. God's word shows manifestly that they have no part of the eelestial heritage, but are already judged to hell fire, if they do not in this life repent, bewail their wretehedness, eonfess their abomination, desire merey, and believe faithfully, to have forgiveness. For heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever. (Matt. v.; Isa. xl.) Therefore this eommination and threat whieh aeeompanieth the eommandment must needs be true and eome to pass. The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Let not these swearers therefore glory in their wiekedness, and think that they shall eseape unpunished, because God taketh not vengeanee on them straightways; but rather let them think that their damnation shall be so mueh the more grievous, seeing they eseape so long without punishment. The rieh glutton of whom we read in the gospel of Luke, lived in this world aeeording to his fleshly appetite, and wanted nothing that might satisfy the beast-like desire of the flesh, yet his end was everlasting damnation. So shall it be unto all them that are wieked transgressors of this holy precept of God. The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. This threat of God is not to be laughed at; for if there be a God, and I am eertainly persuaded there is, I am sure that these abominable swearers shall not eseape unpunished; let them esteem their sin as light and as little as they list, yet I am sure the vengeance of God hangeth

over their heads wheresoever they be. And although God taketh not vengeance on them straightway, yet am I sure that they shall not escape, if in this world, yet not in the world to come; so righteous a judge is God, so faithful is he in all his words. (Psal. cxlv.) How can it otherwise be?

We see by daily experience, that if any man blasphemes an earthly prince, or speaks evil of his name, he is put to death straightway without mercy. If such honour and reverence be given unto a worldly prince, who is earth, and unto earth shall return again, what is to be thought of those who blaspheme the name of the Most High and celestial King, who is King of all kings, and Lord of all lords? The blasphemy done to a mortal man is punished with the sword, and shall the blasphemy done to God escape think you with a fillip in the forehead, or with the knock of a little wooden betel, as it is begun to be punished in certain men's houses now of late? Nay, verily. It is no fillip matter except we will admit such a fillip as shall fillip them down into the bottom of hell-fire. God is no puppet, nor a babe. It is not a fillip that can wipe away the blasphemy of his most blessed name, before his high throne and glorious majesty. Wo be to them that sin, and keep not my commandments, saith the Lord, for surely I will not spare them. In the old law God gave this commandment for the blasphemers of his name, Whosoever curseth his God, saith he, shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall die for it. All the multitude shall stone him to death. Therefore be he citizen, or stranger, if he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, let him die the death. (Lev. xxiv.) What will the blasphemers of God say to this precept? Do they think that God is asleep, so that now he careth not for the glory of his name? Nay, let them be sure God tendereth now his glory as much as ever he did, and abhorreth wickedness now, no less than he hath done ever heretofore. He is a jealous God, and will not suffer them to escape unpunished that pollute and defile his most glorious name. St. Augustine (in Matt.) saith, "They sin no less, who blaspheme Christ reigning in heaven, than they who crucified him walking in earth." A certain writer also in the Hebrew tongue, called Rabbi Aben Ezra, writes thus, "Certainly this is the custom in Egypt even unto this day, that if any man swear by the head of the king, and

doth not fulfil his saying, he shall be the child of death. If that he would offer for his ransom a great sum of gold, yet shall he not live, seeing he hath despised the king openly." If a king does so, who is flesh and blood, whose beginning and end are vanity, much more, yea, a thousand times more ought a man to take heed that he offend not God with his tongue, that he doth not so order his mouth that he maketh his flesh to sin by remembering God in vain. Again, he saith, "There are many which think it no great offence if a man take the name of God in vain. But I will show them that it is greater and more grievous than the breaking of all the commandments that follow. For he that is a manslayer or an adulterer, which surely are great offences, he cannot slay nor play the whoremonger at all times, for he is in fear. But he that hath accustomed himself to vain oaths, committeth in one day innumerable oaths; and he is so greatly in use with this fault, that he perceives it not when he sweareth; and if thou rebukest him and sayest, Wherefore hast thou now so sworn, he straightway sweareth that he swore not, yea, and that for the too much use of swearing. For such, before they bring forth any word, they swear first, thinking that it garnishes their communication very pleasantly so to swear. But if there were in Israel no more faults than this one alone, it were enough to prolong our captivity, and cause that we should be plagued every day more and more." These are the words of the Hebrew interpreter, whereof we may learn how great an offence it is vainly to swear, and how it heaps upon us the plagues and vengeance of God, more than the breaking of any other commandment, except it be for idolatry, which sin this also matches.

Hear me, O ye children, saith the wise man, I will give you a doctrine how ye shall order your mouth. Whoso keepeth it, shall not perish through his lips, nor be hurt through wicked works. As for the sinner he shall be taken in his own vanity. He that is proud and cursed shall fall therein. Let not thy mouth be accustomed with swearing; for in it there are many falls. Let not the naming of God be continually in thy mouth; for like as a servant who is oft punished, cannot be without some sore, even so, whatsoever he be that sweareth and nameth God, shall not be clean purged from sin. A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with wickedness, and the plague shall never

go from his house. If he beguile his brother, his fault shall be upon him. If he acknowledge not his sin, he makes a double offence; and if he sweareth in vain, he shall not be found righteous. For his house shall be full of plagues. The words of the swearer bring death, (God grant that it be not found in the house of Jacob,) but they that fear God eschew all such as lie not weltering in sin. Use not thy mouth unto dishonest and filthy talking, for in it is the word of sin.—Here the wise man plainly affirms, that they which swear and take the name of God in vain, shall be replenished with wickedness, and the grievous plagues of God's vengeance shall fall upon them. So that their house shall be visited with divers punishments and plagues. Oh terrible saying! Too stony is his heart that trembleth not at the hearing of these words. The prophet Zechariah also saith, I turned me, lifting up mine eyes, and looked; and behold a flying book. And he said unto me, What seest thou? I answered, I see a flying book of twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the whole earth. For all thieves shall be judged after this book, and all swearers shall be judged according to the same. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, so that it shall come upon the house of the thief, and upon the house of him that falsely sweareth by my name, and it shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it with the timber and stones thereof. What will swearers and blasphemers of God's most holy name say unto these words of the prophet? Here may they see that the terrible curse of God is come abroad for all thieves and swearers, so that it shall fall upon their house, and consume it, with all that ever pertain unto it. Here may they learn that their judgment is at hand, that their damnation cannot be eschewed except they shortly repent, believe, and amend. For the book of curses flieth abroad. It is no longer kept in secret, and it shall undoubtedly fall on the houses of so many as swear vainly. God can no longer abide this abomination, it is so great, and grown up unto such an height.

Wo be unto all swearers for their oaths. "For a dagger pricketh not so sharply," saith Chrysostom, (Hom. xv.) "as the nature of an oath doth. A sword slayeth not so cruelly as the plague of an oath doth. For a swearer, although he seem to live, yet is he dead already, and has received his deadly wound. And as he that takes a halter

before he goes out of the city, and comes unto the place of execution, and has the hangman following him, is dead so soon as he goes out of the place of judgment, so likewise is he that is a swearer. The oath is not so soon come out of the mouth, but that the swearer is condemned straightway unto eternal damnation."

What will these blasphemers of God's most holy name say to this golden-mouthed doctor Chrysostom; who compares all swearers to thieves, and saith that they are like unto a thief that is condemned unto death, and wears his halter, ready to be hanged? Are not these swearers come now to a fair promotion? They are like thieves condemned to die, saith the holy doctor Chrysostom. The judge has given sentence; they are condemned. So that although they are yet free from the plagues of God's vengeance, as the thief is before he comes to the gallows; yet they may be as sure not to escape them, as though they were now already on their necks. And the longer their punishment is deferred, the more grievous shall it be when it comes.

Many, I grant, in this world are not punished for their great abominable swearing, yet have there not wanted examples in our time, which have abundantly declared how greatly the sin of swearing displeases God. There live at this day, those who have known certain men to be great swearers, some of whom, many years before they died, were grievously punished with strange and innumerable diseases. Some, by the strong hand of God, had their houses, as the prophet Zechariah saith, consumed with fire. Some lost their speech before they died. Some, certain days before they died, had such a heat and burning in their mouths, that by no means could they suffer to have them closed. Their tongue and all that ever was within their mouth was as black as a coal. Were not all these manifest tokens of God's wrath and vengeance for taking his holy name in vain? Would to God, they that were thus punished might be an example to us, for to leave the wicked and ungodly custom of swearing. If we will not cease, but still provoke God unto anger, surely we shall prove and feel those plagues, and much more grievous. And would God our pains might cease in this world, that we might be free from everlasting damnation. (Job viii.) We all profess Christ and call ourselves Christians, why do we not then those things that Christ com-

mandeth us? Christ saith, He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Again, My sheep hear my voice. (John x.) Also, in another place, Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. (John xviii.) If we therefore be of God, why do we not hear the words of God? If we are the sheep of Christ, why do we not hear our Shepherd's voice? (John xv.) If we pertain unto Christ who is the truth itself, why do we not hear his voice? Christ saith, Ye have heard that it was said to them of the old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but perform unto the Lord that which thou hast sworn. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; neither by earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou art not able to make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. (Matt. v.) Hereunto agreeth St. James, saying, Before all things, O my brethren, look ye swear not; neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath. Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, that ye fall not into dissimulation. (James v.) Here are we forbidden to swear by any thing that ever God made; then is it not lawful for us to swear by Him that made all things. If it be sin to swear by the creatures, then must it needs be damnable to swear by the Creator. Why do we not remember these things, and leave off our great swearing? It is a shame to see Christian men live so contrary to their profession. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, at the day of judgment than for us, except we shortly repent, believe, and amend. (Matt. iii.) For the servant who knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. (Luke xii.) Swearing hath ever been counted a thing of such great absurdity that the very Heathen and Gentiles did detest it, insomuch that a certain Greek poet writes on this manner: "Flee swearing, although thine oath be right and according to the truth." What a saying is this of an infidel! Shall not he and such others rise up at the day of judgment, and condemn us, seeing they were infidels and we Christian men? Our Lord be merciful unto us!

All hunt after worldly promotions, and seek to live in pleasure and wealth; but no man seeks how to lead a

godly and innocent life; how to leave their swearing, and to magnify the most glorious name of God. For we go forth still to sin, as though there were no punishment ordained for it at all. We blaspheme the name of God, as though he were so childish that he would never call us unto account for our ungodly blasphemies. We so tear Christ and all the parts of his most blessed body, as though he should never come unto the judgment for to reward the good, and to condemn the evil. Christ saith that we shall give an account at the day of judgment for every idle word that we have spoken. (Matt. xii.) What is then to be thought of our abominable oaths whereby God is so greatly dishonoured? What account shall we give of them? How narrowly shall we be examined of them! What can we answer in this behalf? What can we say? What excuse can we make? I fear unless we shall be ready, it will be our own free will, to run headlong into hell fire, before that terrible sentence of damnation be given, our conscience shall so condemn us! Lord hold thy holy hand over us, and give us grace to amend. St. Paul saith, Let your speech be well savoured and powdered with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man. (Col. iv.) What place hath this commandment of the apostle among them, who so powder their words, that nothing comes out of their mouths but vain oaths and wicked blasphemies. The communication of these men savours little of salt, whereby is understood the wisdom of God's word, it is so fresh and unsavoury. Yea, would God, that these abominable blasphemers of God's most holy name were not extreme enemies to God's word; choosing rather to remain dastards still in the foolishness of the world, than to become wise and prudent in the wisdom of God's word.

All swearers therefore are enemies both to God and to his word. A Christian man may not acquaint himself with such manners, nor so wickedly abuse his tongue. For our tongue is given us, not that we should swear, lie, blaspheme, jest, rail, scoff, mock, and use ungodly talk; but that we should only speak those things which may both turn to the glory of God, and the health of our neighbour. And this is it that St. Paul saith, Let your speech be well savoured and powdered with salt. Our speech is well savoured, seemly, earnest, and comely, when there appears nothing in it that may offend the ears of any true

Christian man, but it is agreeable in all points to godliness and honesty. It is powdered with salt when it utters those things which are godly, wise, and edify so many as are the hearers of it. Let all swearers mark this and amend their communication, lest they be that unsavoury salt which shall be cast out, and trodden under foot. (Matt. v.) Again, he saith, Let no filthy communication proceed out of your mouths, but that which is good to edify withal, when need is, that it may have favour with the hearers. (Eph. iv.) If no filthy communication ought to proceed out of our mouths, much less ought any vain oaths, ungodly swearings, blasphemies, &c. to come forth out of them. If our words ought to be good, to edify withal, then they ought not to be such as should destroy both ourselves and the hearers, which many times happens through wicked oaths. Let not whoredom, saith he, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, or filthiness, or foolish talking, or jesting, be once named among you, as it becometh saints, but rather thanksgiving. (Eph. v.) If these things may not once be named among us, surely much less, yea, a thousand times much less, ought oaths, swearings, and blasphemies of God's most holy name be named among us, and heard in our daily speech. If the wrath and vengeance of God be wont to fall upon the children of unbelief for these things aforesaid, as St. Paul testifieth certainly, (Titus i.) let all swearers be certainly assured that they shall not escape the plagues of God's vengeance, and their damnation shall be the more grievous, forasmuch as they profess godliness, and live nothing according thereunto. What are they any other than blasphemous mockers of God? They say that they know God, but with their deeds they deny him, seeing they are become abominable and disobedient, and evil-minded unto all good works. As St. Peter writes, (2 Peter ii.) They are wells without water, clouds carried about of a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. They are trees without fruit at gathering time, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots. They are the raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame. (Jude.) How then can they escape the vengeance of God? The people of Sodom and Gomorrah sinned against nature, and therefore were they consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven. (Gen. xviii.) The swearers sin against the God and Maker of nature, and is it to be thought that they shall escape unpunished? If such as commit the least sin be punished,

how can they then escape who offend in the greatest? They may be sure, if they do not amend, not only to be plagued with fire and brimstone, but also to suffer all kinds of intolerable pains, yea, and that in hell, where is no redemption nor mercy to be had. The Lord, saith David, seeth both the righteous and ungodly, but whoso delighteth in wickedness, him his soul abhorreth. Upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire, brimstone, storm, and tempest; this reward shall they have to drink. For the Lord is righteous and he loveth righteousness, his countenance beholdeth the thing that is just. (Psalm xi.) Again, he saith, God is a righteous judge, and God is ever threatening, If men will not turn, he hath whet his sword, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath prepared him the weapons of death, and ordained his arrows to destroy. (Psalm vii.)

We read in the fourth book of Moses, (Numb. xv.) that when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks upon the sabbath-day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation, and they put him in ward, for it was not declared what should be done unto him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall die. Let all the multitude stone him with stones without the host. And all the multitude brought him without the host, and stoned him with stones, and he died, as the Lord commanded Moses. If the man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath-day, for transgressing that commandment, which notwithstanding was but a ceremonial law, serving, but for a time, and a figure of our spiritual quietness and rest, which we ought to have continually in our consciences towards God; which precept also is now abolished, and stands in none effect, so that we are lords of the sabbath-day, and may appoint what day it shall please the head rulers, to cease from labour, that we may the more conveniently come together to the temple for to pray, to hear the word of God, to see the blessed sacraments ministered, &c. If the man that gathered sticks, I say, upon the sabbath-day was stoned unto death, by the commandment of God, for transgressing that precept, how may these swearers then persuade themselves that they shall escape unpunished, although they swear and abuse God by their unlawful oaths? The other precept was ceremonial, and is now of no strength; but this commandment is moral, and

abideth still in perfect strength, and so shall do so long as the world standeth. Shall the transgression of this then escape unpunished? The other was punished by death, and shall this escape free and without punishment? Let the wicked worldlings laugh at the matter as much as they list, there liveth a God against whom the offence is committed, who will not suffer the blasphemies of his holy name, and of his creatures, to escape unpunished. And well were it with these abominable swearers, who go forth in their wickedness, and will not amend, if in this world they might be consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven, as the people of Sodom were; or stoned unto death as the transgressor of the sabbath-day was; so that their plagues and pains might on this manner end, and they afterward enjoy everlasting life. But it is to be feared, that after this life, they shall feel more grievous torments than ever the people of Sodom did either suffer in this world, or where they are now. God be merciful unto them, and give them grace to amend.

II. OF PERJURY AND JUDICIAL OATHS.

Hitherto have we heard how grievous an offence it is before God, to swear, and to take his most blessed name in vain, or to abuse any of his creatures by vain and unlawful oaths. We have heard also how God will not, by any means, suffer those to escape unpunished who wickedly swear and break this holy commandment. Now seeing that God will so sharply punish them that take his name in vain, or fear not to swear for every little trifle, by him or by his creatures, what is then to be said of perjury? What is to be thought of those who both falsely and willingly forswear themselves? Into how great punishment shall they fall, who fear nothing at all to swear in a false matter upon the holy gospel, that most blessed word of everlasting truth, yea, and to call God and all his holy saints to be witnesses in that behalf! In how troublous and raging sea sail these wretches and miserable caitiffs! What intolerable plagues abide them! What fierce punishments and cruel torments are prepared for them! How is it possible that they can escape the most extreme vengeance of God? Not only to swear, but also falsely to swear; not only falsely to swear, but also to swear upon the holy gospel; not only to swear upon the holy gospel, but also to call God and all his holy saints to be witnesses, yea, and that in a wrong

matter! O detestable abomination! O wickedness more than can be expressed! O shameful sin worthy all kind of punishment! O incomparable vice worthy to be revenged, not with wearing papers only,* but with the most bitter and intolerable pains, that are prepared in hell for Satan and his ministers. Thou shalt not forswear thyself, saith the Scripture. It is not lawful for us vainly to swear, shall we then presume falsely to forswear ourselves? Although the company of those who suffer themselves to be perjured, I trust, is not to be compared in number unto the multitude of those who are the customable swearers, yet, at this day, there are many who are guilty of that fault, and would to God it were not so in England. What is to be said of those men who for a little trifle will forswear themselves, and give their souls from God to the devil?

How miserable, again, are they, who although they know the matter to be wrong, will, for a little money, or for favour of the party, willingly take an oath upon a book, and falsely forswear themselves, contrary to their own conscience? Are not there, think you, in the world, those who for covetousness of temporal possessions, make claim to other men's lands, forge false evidence, invent wrong titles, and bring in false witnesses with them to swear upon a book that all is truth, when they know the contrary, and their conscience condemns them for so swearing? What abominable wretches are all these! What perjured caitiffs may these be counted! What punishment can be invented sufficiently great for their detestable wickedness? Thus by their perjury and false witness is the true owner deceived of his right, deprived of his goods, cast into poverty, made wretched, and thrown into such misery that neither he, nor his wife, nor yet his children, are able to live, but many times perish for hunger. O wretched

* A common punishment for false swearers was to make them stand in the pillory, or to ride on horseback, wearing papers on which their offences were written. In the wood engravings of the old editions of Fox's Acts and Monuments, Dr. London, the warden of New College in Oxford, and Simons, a lawyer of Windsor, are represented on horseback with papers upon their heads, as they were sentenced to ride about Windsor, Reading, and Newbury, and to stand in the pillory, for perjury in bringing false accusations against Pearson, Testwood, and Filmer, who were burned as heretics in 1543, under the law of the Six articles. Dr. London and his assistants also had secretly brought false accusations against some of the king's privy chamber.

creatures! Oh insatiable wolves! While they have respect only unto their covetous affection, and labour to satisfy that, they neglect and despise both the health of their own souls, and the wealth of their neighbour. What for is all that? Yet by this means have they obtained their purpose, and set the other beggarly fellow aside! Now they are men of fair lands! They are gentlemanly fellows! They are able to live without their dame!* They shall bear a rule in the country, and be counted among the most honest men of the parish! They shall have now whereof to live at their hearts' ease, so long as they live; and when they die, they shall leave their heirs such livings, that the best gentleman in all the country shall be glad to marry their daughters unto them! Are not these great commodities? Who would want these pleasures that may have them by one means or other? Oh miserable wretches, who for a little easy living, and that they may leave their children wealthy behind them, fear nothing at all to cast their souls into hell fire! What doth it profit a man to win all the whole world, and at the last, to lose his own soul? Too great a wretch is he, who for worldly possessions will put his soul in danger! Too far estranged is he from God, who regards the goods of this world more than his own soul's health! And what advantage shall he have by those goods wrongfully gotten, which he hath left unto his son, when his soul lieth burning in hell fire, and grievously punished with all kinds of cruel and intolerable pains? The son is counted a gentleman before the world for the goods' sake; the father is reckoned before God and his holy saints, a fire-brand of hell! The son is lord of many possessions, the father is a wretch and hath nothing! The son is replenished with dainties, joy, and pleasures, the father is filled full of bitter sorrows, grievous pains, and intolerable torments! The son sings, plays, dances, and makes merry, the father weeps, laments, sorrows, and wishes himself never to have been born. Behold what is the end of evil-gotten goods! Behold how dame Perjury rewards her servants at the latter end! Behold unto what point falsehood brings them that use it!

Why do not men remember these things, and labour to live justly, righteously, and of their own? Godliness is great riches, saith St. Paul, if a man be content with that he hath. (1 Tim. vi.) O that men would once be wise,

* Able to live independent.

and remember their latter end; so would they not hunt about to get the goods of this wretched world, by hook or by crook, as they do now-a-days, but rather lay up treasures for themselves in heaven, where neither rust nor moths corrupt, and where thieves neither break through nor steal. (Matt. vi.) Treasures that are wickedly gotten profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death, saith Solomon. (Prov. x.) Let not, therefore, those men think, who so greedily gather together the goods of this world, yea, and that unrighteously, let them not think that those possessions can long endure in their stock, kindred, and lineage. For we have both heard and seen, that goods wrongfully gotten are soon dispersed abroad, and come to nought. Is not this a common saying among us, Evil gotten goods will never come to good proof? Again, Goods which are wrongfully gotten, the third heir shall scarcely enjoy. The Latinists also say, A thing that is evil gotten never thriveth, but the spending of it is worse than the getting was. The ancient poet Claudianus has some very goodly verses pertaining unto this our matter. He says, "The perjuries of the father escaping punishment in this world, shall fall upon the son, insomuch that the son is plagued for that the father has offended. And, look, what riches the tongue of the deceitful father gathered together, even the very same has the tongue of the son paid again and wastefully spent." The Greek poet, Hesiod, also saith, "That man who wrongly testifies, and falsely forswears himself, not only hurts justice, but himself also is so hurt, that he can never be healed after." Moreover he saith, "That all his posterity and children shall be of the less reputation ever after, so that they shall live in ignominy, and their renown shall be obscure, dark, and of no price before all men." Who now therefore is so mad as falsely to forswear himself for a little dunglike muck, seeing that by this means he shall not only provoke God's wrath unto himself, condemn his own soul, cast himself into everlasting damnation, but also procure plagues for his children that succeed him? O that men would once be wise, and learn this lesson of St. Paul, and follow it, Having meat, drink, and clothes, let us be contented. (1 Tim. vi.) For we brought nothing into the world, neither shall we carry anything out of it. (Job. i.)

But would that lady Perjury did exercise her unmerciful and tyrannical cruelty only in getting and scratching

up together, falsely and contrary to all justice, the goods of this world. Would that she did not also through her unrighteous violence and churlish malice, thirst, shed, and suck up innocent blood. Would that through her false witness-bearing, true men were not put unto death without a cause. Hath it not been heard, yea, known and seen, think you, that of mere malice, and through the perjuries of false forsworn caitiffs, who have taken an oath and testified contrary to the truth, and given false evidence at assizes, sessions, or elsewhere, many men, both honest and true, have been hanged, or otherwise rid out of the way, yea, and that without a cause, as it has been proved afterwards? Some also have been condemned for heretics, and also burnt for speaking against antichrist and idolatry, &c. What will men say unto this? Is not this a thing worthy to be lamented? Should not there be a redress in this behalf? Deserves this malicious perjury to be winked at, and not rather to be punished according to the deserts thereof? Awake, awake, ye questmongers,* and take heed you give a true, just, and right verdict. Remember that ye go upon life and death, and therefore ought ye to do nothing rashly. Remember that it is not the blood of an ox, or of a calf, that shall be shed, but the blood of a Christian man, for whose life and health our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ did suffer his most precious blood to be shed; (1 Cor. iii.) and in whose heart the Holy Ghost dwelleth. Remember that he is the image of God, who hath his life put into your hands either to be saved or to be cast away. Remember that if ye destroy the temple of God, and handle a Christian man otherwise than right require, surely God will destroy you. (Gen. ii.) The blood of that innocent whom ye so cruelly have murdered, shall cry for vengeance against you, both day and night, as the blood of Abel did upon Cain, (Gen. iv.; 1 John iii.) and shall never cease until God hath taken vengeance on you. Remember that with what measure ye mete to others, with the same shall it be measured again unto you. (Matt. vii.; Luke vi.) Therefore take ye heed; be not rash nor hasty in giving your verdict. Be prudent, wise, and circumspect. Ponder all things with an upright conscience. Weigh the matter in the balance of justice. Mark all parties. Believe not every light tale straightways, but boult out† with all diligence the original of it.

* Jurors. † Sift out.

Let neither the riches, the fame, nor the dignity, nor yet the gifts of that man who puts in the indictment against another, move you anything at all to give the more credence unto his words, and by that means, to cast away the party accused, until ye have thoroughly boulted out the truth of the matter. Show such indifference that ye may not be found at the dreadful day of judgment guilty of the shedding of any righteous blood, but blameless, and with a pure conscience.

Ye judges also, execute your office according to equity. Suffer not the comfortless to be oppressed. Let justice, conjoined with a fatherly pity and tender compassion, reign in your breasts. Suffer no matter of unrighteousness to prevail before the seat of your judging-place. Remember that while ye sit in judgment ye are not private persons; ye represent the person of God; ye execute God's office; ye are the image of God. Yea, ye are gods, and the sons of the Most High, as the Scripture calleth you. (Psalm lxxxii.) Your judging-place is the judging-place of God; your mouth is the mouth of God. Beware therefore what sentence ye pronounce. Let all things be done with great deliberation. Give not judgment so hastily, that ye shall afterward repent you thereof. Remember that as you judge, so shall ye be judged. (Matt. vii.) Remember that God hath set you in authority that ye should righteously judge of all things. Remember that God hath given you two ears, one to hear the accuser, and another to hear him that is accused, that by this means ye should not be partial, nor wedded to one tale, but indifferently* hear both parties. Remember that forasmuch as ye occupy the place of God, ye ought not to pervert judgment, but to do the office of God, and to execute justice, lest the High Judge, for your unrighteous sentence pronounced, condemn you, and cast you into hell fire. For God, saith the Scripture, shall appear to you, O ye rulers and judges, very dreadfully, yea, and that without any long tarrying. Wonderful hard judgment shall they have that bear rule. To the man of small power mercy is granted, but as for the mighty, they shall suffer mighty and exceeding great torments. For God, who is ruler of all things, will not regard one person more than another, neither will he fear the greatness of any man; for he made both the little and the great, and he hath a

* With impartiality.

like care for all. (Deut. x.; 2 Chron. xix.; Job xxxiv.;) Notwithstanding, surely the men that are in authority shall have the greater punishment.

Therefore ye that judge the earth take heed, love righteousness. Judge truly, O ye sons of men. Seek all means possible that no innocent blood be shed. Admit no false witnesses, no unlawful oaths, no false swearings, no malicious perjuries to be brought and received before your judging-place, which is the seat of God so long as ye judge truly, and do your office according to equity. When any matter is brought before you, first weigh, ponder, and consider it yourself diligently, and afterwards deliver it to the quest-mongers, according to the course of the law, and exhort them, in the name of God, Christianly, charitably, friendly, righteously, indifferently, and with single eye and uncorrupt conscience to look upon the matter, and to deal so uprightly in that behalf, and to give so true and just verdict, even as though it should be presented and offered up to the high and everlasting Judge, even Christ. Declare unto them how great an offence it is before God to give a false verdict, and by that means to have innocent blood shed, and their own souls condemned. Let the quest-mongers have convenient leisure to debate the matter among themselves, soberly, discreetly, and prudently; and so, after much consultation, and long deliberation, give an answer according to truth and justice. And let such as shall be upon the quest be honest men, sober, sage, faithful, wise, discreet, prudent, godly, merciful, righteous, loving, indifferent, pitiful, brotherlike; and even such as fear God, love his word, have knowledge in his holy law, walk with an upright conscience both before God and man, and have always been of good report and honest fame among their neighbours. This, undoubtedly, all things being handled according to equity and justice, shall not only maintain true and righteous judgment, but also make greatly unto the preservation of innocent blood, so that God, the high Judge, shall greatly be glorified in all our judicial affairs.

But let us proceed with our matter. Not only these aforesaid are perjured persons, who falsely forswear themselves, and testify in unjust and wrong matters, but also so many as have taken just and lawful oaths, and by them have promised to do some righteous and godly thing, and yet

leave it undone, and work contrary to their godly promise. As, for an example, the magistrates and head officers of the public weal promise with a solemn oath to do all things according to equity and justice, and to accept no person in judgment, but to do all things uprightly, to maintain the good, and to punish the evil; to exalt virtue, and to suppress vice. Now if they, contrary to their oath, work unrighteousness, oppress the succourless, judge for favour, condemn the good, save the evil, persecute the favourers of God's word, maintain the papists, neglect virtue, uphold vice, &c. so are they falsely forsworn, and shall not escape the plague of perjury. The bishops and priests promise faithfully to be earnest preachers and setters forth of God's word, and to live according unto the same; now if they do the contrary, that is to say, if they do not labour in the harvest of the Lord's word, nor lead an honest and virtuous life unto the good example of others, but seek after worldly promotion, live idly upon their benefices, wallow in all beastlike pleasures, tumble themselves in all kind of sin, hate them that are preachers of God's word, drive men from reading the Holy Bible, so are they falsely forsworn, and shall not escape the plague of perjury. The man and wife have promised faith and truth between them, that they will be just and true one to another; the man to love his wife as himself, and to hold him contented with her; the woman reverently to fear and obey her husband; now if they break this promise, so that one delights not in the other, but each of them seeks after strange flesh, so are they falsely forsworn, and they shall not escape the plague of perjury.

All subjects have promised to their rulers unfeigned obedience, and willing service; now if, contrary to their promise, they resist the high powers, become disobedient, and repugn against them, so are they falsely forsworn, and shall not escape the plague of perjury. All these heretofore rehearsed are guilty of the sin of perjury, if they do contrary to the oath which they have made, and therefore may they be sure to receive a reward worthy their blasphemous tongues.

Some man will say, peradventure, Are all oaths to be observed? Shall a man fall into the sin of perjury, if he performs not whatsoever he hath promised? I answer, Nay, not so. God forbid that all oaths, promises, and vows should be performed! For many are foolish, wicked, and

ungodly; therefore, as such displease God, so ought they to be broken. These are they which fight against God's word, which also snarl* the consciences of so many as keep them, and make them that accomplish them to commit impiety and wickedness. These by no means are to be kept by any Christian man, except he will offend God grievously by the observance of them. For an unfaithful and foolish promise, saith Solomon, displeases God. (Eccl. v.) "In evil promises, break thy faith," saith Isidorus: "in a filthy vow, change the determination. That which thou hast vowed unadvisedly, look thou do it not. For that is a wicked promise which is fulfilled in sin." Again he saith, "If any man doth rashly determine to do any of those things that please not God, let him be sorry for it, and seeing that his determination was done contrary to the commandment of God, let it be called back again, and stand in none effect." Jerome also saith, "Thou shalt do better, O brother, if thou dost abstain from the ungodly act, than if thou dost stiffly perform foolish words and perilous vows." Hereto agreeth the saying of Augustine, "It is a point of great wisdom, for a man to call back that again, which he hath evil spoken." Ambrose also saith, "It is against all godly honesty, many times, to perform the oath that is made; as Herod, who sware that he would give to the daughter of Herodias whatsoever she would ask. He therefore slew John, because he would not deny his promise." In the council of Toledo it was decreed, That it is better not to fulfil the vows of a foolish promise than by the observance of them to commit any wickedness. That oath, promise, or vow, therefore, which displeases God, repugns the divine verity, fights against the Lord's word, provokes unto sin, condemns the conscience of the keeper, and cannot be performed without wickedness, ought by no means to be observed and kept; but rejected as a thing dangerous and hurtful both to body and soul.† Such an oath, promise, or vow made Jephthah, that if God would deliver the children of Ammon into his hands, when he came home again in peace, whatsoever thing came first out of his doors, should be the Lord's, and he would offer it up

* Entangle.

† It is plain that Becon means only that such oaths as are clearly opposed to the commands of God are not to be kept; but the reader is of course aware that the modern papists, like the pharisees of old, have made innumerable refinements, whereby men may contrive to escape the performance of their solemn engagements.

for a burnt offering. At his return, it came to pass that his daughter, being his only child, came out to meet him with timbrels and dances. When he saw her he was much amazed, and greatly sorrowful, because of his vow that he had made to God. Notwithstanding, he said, I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and cannot go back. So that to fulfil his foolish and wicked vow, he committed the grievous sin of manslaughter, and cruelly slew his own daughter, contrary to the law of God; when it had been better, and much more godly, to have broken his foolish vow, and to have kept his hands clean from the blood of his daughter, and to have given God right hearty thanks for the victory he had gotten over his enemies.*

For it is the sacrifice of praise that honoureth God. The calves† of our lips are acceptable sacrifice, and welcome unto God, I mean thanksgiving. (Psal. l.) For he delighteth not in the slaughter of any creature, but rather willeth that they should live unto that use and end for the which they were made. (Heb. xiii.) God the Father, by the psalmist, saith, Hear, O my people, let me speak; let me testify among you, O Israel; I am God, yea, I am even thy God. I will not reprove thee because of thy sacrifices, thy burnt-offerings are always in my sight. I will take no bullocks out of thy house, nor goats out of thy fields. For all the beasts of the field are mine, and thousands of cattle upon the hills. I know all the fowls upon the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are in my sight. If I be hungry, I will not tell thee, for the whole world is mine, and all that therein is. Thinkest thou that I will eat the flesh of oxen, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. And call upon me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, that thou shalt thank me. (Psalm l.) The psalmist himself also saith, In me, O God, are thy vows, which I shall pay unto thee, even very hearty praises, and thanksgiving. He calleth the vows, that we should offer unto God for his benefits, praises, and thanksgiving, and not the killing and offering up of our children, or the performing of such foolish and wicked

* Many of the best commentators upon holy writ differ from this opinion. They consider that the words of Scripture do not imply that Jephthah actually put his daughter to death, but that he secluded her from the world, and dedicated her to the service of God.

† Offerings.

vows, which cannot be performed without sin and ungodliness. Herod also made a promise to the daughter of Herodias, when she danced and salied* so pleasantly before him and his lords, at a certain banquet, that he would give her whatsoever she would ask, even unto the half of his kingdom. She, by the counsel of her wicked mother, asked for the head of John Baptist. So that the king, because he would not go back of his word, suffered the holy prophet of God to be slain; and no cause why, but only that he thought it would not stand with his honour and royal dignity to break his promise. Ah foolish vow, and more foolish king! Ah wicked promise and more wicked king! Better had it been for him, a thousand times, to have gone back from his word, to have broken his wicked vow, and to have lost all his royal dignity, than that so virtuous a man should have been slain. Wo be to all those vows and promises, which are not fulfilled without sin and wickedness!

Again, we read in the Acts of the Apostles that there were more than forty men who had conspired against Paul, and made a solemn vow, an earnest promise, and a foul devout oath, that they would neither eat nor drink until they had slain Paul. (Acts xxiii.) Here was a hot burning zeal. They thought every hour a thousand years, till they might meet with the holy apostle, and shed his blood; they were so loath to be found double in their words, and so sorry that he should teach any more such new learning and late sprung up heresy, unto the great confusion of their holy synagogue, and the utter shame of the foully devout fathers, the pharisees, scribes, lawyers, priests, rulers of the temple, elders of the people, &c. To prevent these high inconveniences, and to suppress the great enormities newly raised up by the means of Paul's doctrine, ye will not easily believe what pains these men took. They could not rest either night or day. As for meat, drink, and sleep, these were gone from them. Be merry at their hearts they could never, until they had slain Paul the great heretic, that teacher of new learning, that bringer in of new laws, that destroyer of all the old laudable customs, that troubler of the common peace, that sower of discord, that perverter of the holy old religion, that enemy of all good devotion, &c. Therefore made they a solemn

* Leaped, jumped.

vow, in good time might it be spoken, that they would taste nothing, no, not so much as a poor aleberry* for the comfort of their heart, until they had slain Paul; insomuch that they had gone so far indeed, that they had rather slay Paul, and cast their souls into hell-fire for doing that mischievous act, than they would once break their vow. For they judged by this means, to do God a high sacrifice. Surely I think that if the pope of Rome had at that time been reigning, and in his full power, they would scarcely have believed that he had been able to dispense with their vow, it was so solemn, fervent, and sprung out of the heart root! Is it not to be thought that they were hot in their matters, when they could not keep their mischievous pretence secret, but came unto the chief priests and elders, as covers worthy such cups, and ghostly fathers fit for such a confession, and told them that they had bound themselves with a vow, that they would eat nothing until they had slain Paul? Had it not been great pity, think you, that these men should have died for hunger, seeing they fasted for so good a purpose? Oh holy votaries! I marvel how they could ever pacify their consciences afterwards, seeing they made so solemn a vow, and then broke it; for they never slew Paul. So mighty a Lord is God, to defend his servants from the cruel hands of bloody tyrants. But those holy religious men are to be held excused, forasmuch as their will was good, although they could not bring it to pass! Their will was taken for the very act! So that before the world they were counted godly persons, because they had a mind to pay their vows, and did the best that in them was to perform their promise so solemnly made and taken; and before God they were accounted malicious and cruel bloody manslayers. For their will was taken for the deed.

Now in all such foolish, wicked, and ungodly vows, oaths, and promises there ought to be no faith kept, seeing that the end of them tends unto an evil purpose and plain wickedness, as holy Bede testifies. (Hom. xlv.) "If it shall come to pass," saith he, "at any time that we swear or promise anything unadvisedly, which being kept should turn unto an evil end, let us know that, with more wholesome counsel, it ought to be changed freely and without

* A beverage common when this tract was written—ale warmed with sugar and spices, and sops of bread.

any scruple of conscience; and when necessity doth compel us, we ought rather to forswear ourselves, than for the eschewing of perjury we should fall into any other more grievous sin. For David did swear by God that he would slay Nabal, a foolish and ungodly man, and destroy all that ever pertained unto him; yet at the first intercession of Abigail, being a wise woman, he straightway let go his threats, put again the sword into the scabbard, neither sorrowed he, as though he had committed any fault for such perjury. (1 Sam. xxv.) Hereunto pertains the saying of Ambrose, (De Offic. lib. i.) "That David did not fulfil his oath by the shedding of blood, was the greater godliness." I see that David, being a godly and holy man, fell into rash swearing, and yet that he had rather not do what he had sworn, than fulfil his oath by the shedding of man's blood. Jerome saith, (In Hieremia,) "That an oath ought to have three companions, truth, judgment, and righteousness; where these are wanting, it is no oath, but plain perjury." Therefore the oath, promise, or vow that is not grounded on truth, judgment, and righteousness, ought to be broken. It is grounded on truth, when it is agreeable to God's word, which is truth itself. It is grounded on judgment, when it is not rashly, foolishly, and childishly made, but advisedly, and with high prudence and great deliberation. It is grounded on righteousness, when there shall rise up no evil of it, either unto ourselves, or unto our neighbours. All oaths and promises thus taken and made, ought to be observed and kept, but if otherwise, to be broken, refused, and cast away without any scruple of conscience or vexation, and trouble of mind. For this sentence of the preacher abideth always true, An unfaithful and foolish promise displeaseth God. Eccl. v.

Thus we perceive what oaths, promises, or vows ought to be observed, and which they are that should be rejected. So that all godly oaths and promises ought to be observed.* They that do not labour to fulfil them forswear themselves, and shall not escape the plague of perjury.

Now will I return thither, from whence I made digression. God, in the old law, among the Jews, could not

* The reader will observe that Becon allows no room for casuistry; he refers all "to the law and to the testimony."

abide a false witness, but commanded that he should die the death. If he cannot abide a false witness who may testify without an oath, how then can he abide them, who do not only bear false witness, but also in the confirmation thereof add an oath, yea, and that a false oath, and make God to be a witness in an unjust and wrong matter. So that by this means the wretch is willingly perjured, and falsely forsworn, God is blasphemed, God's most holy name is abused, justice is subverted, truth is oppressed, falsehood is maintained, wrong sentence is pronounced, the contrary party, although the truth be on his side, is condemned; the man is utterly impoverished, and for ever after beggared, both he, his wife, and all his children, if he have any. Are all these things but trifles? Are all these things light matters, and things of small importance? Is it but a trifle to bear false witness, to swear, to be perjured, to be falsely forsworn, to blaspheme God, to abuse his holy name, to subvert justice, to oppress the truth, to maintain falsehood, to pronounce wrong sentence, to condemn the guiltless person, to impoverish and utterly beggar both him and so many as pertain unto him for ever and ever? Do all these things, which God so greatly abhors, deserve no punishment?

These perjured wretches shall not escape; let them believe me, they shall not escape from the terrible vengeance of God. For although the day go on their side, and God defers his plagues, so that they are not punished as soon as they have committed the offence, yet let them be well assured, they shall not escape; surely they shall not escape. The poet Tibullus, being a heathen, and yet not ignorant of the greatness of this abomination, and certainly persuaded that perjury cannot escape unpunished, be it ever so secretly handled and craftily daubed, writes thus: "Ah wretch!" saith he, "although a man at the first keeps his perjuries and false oaths ever so secret, yet may he be sure at the last that they will come to light, unto his great shame, so that punishment will come upon him before he is aware, for his wickedness." The Greek poet Phocylides also saith, "Forswear not thyself, either ignorantly, or willingly. For the immortal God hateth the false-swearer, whatsoever he be that sweareth." Again, Cicero, the famous prince of eloquence, and most eloquent orator, saith, (Lib. ii. De legibus,) "The pain of perjury

before God is everlasting damnation; and before men perpetual dishonour, shame, reproach, and ignominy."

God hates perjury so greatly in every condition, that he grievously punished Zedekiah, because, contrary to his oath, he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Seeing then that God will so grievously punish all kind of oaths, both vain and unjust, both idle swearing and perjury, what will these idle swearers and false forsworn creatures say unto this matter? With what conscience will they appear before the high throne, and righteous judging-place of Christ? What will they say for themselves? What excuse will they make? What shift will they invent? Will they fly unto the custom, and say that it is the fashion of the world so to do? I answer, Christ said to his disciples, Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. (John xv.) Now they that follow the fashions of the world, are none of Christ's disciples; so it follows that all swearers pertain not unto Christ, seeing they so greatly follow the manners of the world. And whereas they object that it is the custom so to swear, this can nothing excuse them. For we may not look what the custom, but what the truth of God's word wills us to do. Follow not the common sort of people, saith the Scripture, for to do evil. Again, do not ye those things which they have done, who were before you, neither be ye polluted and defiled in them. (Exod. xxiii. Lev. xviii.) The prophet Zechariah also saith, Be not ye like your forefathers, neither follow ye the fashions of them. The holy martyr Cyprian saith, (Lib. Epist. ii. Epist. iv.) "Undoubtedly we must both hear and do that which Christ hath done, and which he hath commanded to be done, seeing that he saith in his gospel, If ye do those things that I command you, I will no more call you servants, but friends." And that Christ alone ought to be heard, the Father from heaven testified, (Matt. xvii. Mark ix. Luke ix. 2 Peter i.) saying, This is my well-beloved Son in whom I am fully satisfied, hear ye him. If then Christ alone ought to be heard, we ought not to mark what any man before us thought best to be done, but what Christ did first, who is before all men. Again, Cyprian saith, "A custom without truth, is an old error." Therefore, leaving the errors, let us follow the truth. "When the truth is once come to light," saith Augustine, "let the custom give place to the truth. For Peter also, who did circumcise, gave place to Paul preaching the truth." There-

fore, seeing that Christ is the truth, we ought rather to follow the truth than the custom. "If thou dost lay against me the custom," saith Gregory the great, "thou must mark what the Lord saith, I am the way, truth, and life. He said not, I am the custom, but the truth." Now hath Christ said to us in his holy gospel, Thou shalt not swear at all. (John xiv. Matt. v.) Why then do they not rather follow the truth and doctrine of Christ, than the wicked and ungodly custom?

But many are so addicted to customs and old usages now-a-days, that although they see the Scripture manifestly condemns their crooked customs and wicked usages, yet will they by no means give place to the truth. If a man object and lay the Scriptures against them, and would so reform them charitably; then are they ready straightway to accuse him of heresy, and to bring him unto a fagot. Of so little authority is the most holy word of God accounted with these belly-gods and wicked worldlings now-a-days, and so hard a thing is it to speak against a custom, be it ever so wicked and ungodly.

Another sort glory and rejoice so greatly in their wickedness of swearing, that they fear nothing at all to take upon them to maintain it by the Scriptures. Saith not the psalmist, say they, All that swear by him shall be praised? (Psal. lxiii.) Doth not God the Father also give a commandment, and say, Thou shalt fear thy Lord God, and swear by his name? (Deut. x.) As concerning the first text which they allege, I answer, These glorious and famous swearers differ nothing from their father the devil. For as he wrested the Scripture, when he tempted Christ, (Matt. iv.) so likewise do they. The words of the psalmist are these, All that swear in him shall be praised. He saith not, all that swear by him, but in him. To swear in God, is to call God to witness in a just, righteous, and earnest matter; to take an oath for the glory of God, for the promotion of his word, for the maintenance of the Christian faith, or else for the health of our neighbour. They that do thus, swear in God, and they shall not be condemned, but praised for their oath. As touching the second text, wherein, they say, they are not only suffered freely to swear, but also commanded so to do; I answer, When evil things began to increase in the world, as Chrysostom writes, (Hom. xxv.) when there was a confusion

made in every place and no order; when men fell unto the service and worshipping of idols; when all faith was lost, and all unfaithfulness reigned; then began the infidels, seeing that one would not trust and believe another, in matters of controversy, to call upon their gods for witnesses, protesting thereby that they spake truth, forasmuch as they called their gods to witness in the matter, (whom to name they thought it not lawful, but in serious, earnest, grave, weighty, and necessary matters,) and by this means obtained they faith one of another. Now forasmuch as God had selected the Israelites from the Gentiles to be his people, and would by no means that they should in any point follow their wickedness, lest thereby they should be allured from the true worship of God unto idolatry, he gave a commandment to them, that in all matters of controversy, and in such affairs as should make unto his glory, and the health of their brothers, they should not call any of those false gods, whom the heathen worshipped, unto witness, nor swear by their names, but call Him a witness, and swear by His name; and so every one should believe the other, for the reverence and honour that they owe to his most holy and blessed name.

What is this to the purpose? What refuge can these abominable swearers have here? This commandment only serves for grave, weighty, serious, and earnest matters, and they abuse it to cloak and cover their wicked and abominable custom of swearing. Is this allowable before God? Will this go for good payment? No, surely, God will not thus be mocked. God will not suffer his most glorious name so wickedly to be abused. God will not abide that his worship, honour, renown, glory, and magnificence should so be obscured, defaced, and blotted. God is a jealous God, and he cannot abide that he should be dishonoured by any means. I am the Lord, saith he, this is my name; I will give my glory to none other. (Isa. xlii.) Here therefore have these swearers no refuge, but still run headlong into everlasting damnation.

Another company that use swearing say, We think no harm when we swear, therefore it can be no great fault. I answer, Yet are ye not so faultless nor excused. For the Scripture saith, that we shall give a strait account at the dreadful day of judgment for every idle word that we speak. (Matt. xii.) What is then to be thought of our idle and vain oaths, I pray you? Shall we not give an account

of them? Yes, we may be sure, and also be condemned for them, if we do not repent, believe, and amend. Again, Of thy words shalt thou be justified, and of thy words shalt thou be condemned. How goeth it then with our oaths? In what ease stand they? The wise man saith, The mouth that lieth slayeth the soul. Do not vain oaths so in like manner?

And whereas it is said, We think no harm—I answer, the Scripture saith, Of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things. (Matt. xii. Luke vi.) What shall we say to this? Are we not here plainly condemned? Another sort excuse themselves, and say, Few or none will believe us, except we swear. To this answereth Chrysostom in this manner; (Hom. vii.) "An oath maketh not a worthy man to be believed; but the testimony of his life, the integrity and pureness of his conversation, and a good mind. For many oftentimes have sworn and entangled themselves greatly, and yet have they not made men to believe them. Others have only made, as it were, a beck, and have appeared much more worthy to be believed, than they who have so greatly sworn." These words declare plainly, that swearing among faithful and honest men is not needed; and for them that are unfaithful and regard no honesty, surely all the oaths in the world will not make them to be believed of those who are virtuous and godly disposed. Therefore this can be none excuse for these swearers. Among the faithful, oaths are not needed, and among the unfaithful they profit not. For he that believeth not a man without an oath, neither will he believe him though he swear ever so much. But alas for pity that ever faith should be so decayed among Christian men, that one will not believe another, except they pollute and defile the glorious name of our Lord God, yea, and that in trifling matters. It is high time for the world to be at an end, when one man trusteth not another. Do ye think, said Christ, that the Son of man shall find any faith on the earth, when he shall come? Luke xviii.

Thus we see that all excuses which are invented to maintain the devilish custom of swearing are nothing worth. Our condemnation abideth still. The heat of God's vengeance towards us is nothing abated. So that if we would

be saved, there is no remedy but to leave our wicked swearing, to reverence the name of God, and thankfully to use his creatures; ever setting before our eyes this commandment of God, *Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.* Also the saying of Christ, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; neither by earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; nor yet by thy head shalt thou swear, for thou canst not make one hair either white or black. But your communication shall be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay; for what is more than this cometh of evil.

Some man, peradventure, will here demand and say, Are all oaths taken away from Christian men? Yea, forsooth, all oaths that are vain and trifling, false and unrighteous. Is it not lawful then for a Christian man to swear in any condition? Yes, verily. God forbid that all kind of swearing should be taken from Christian men, as those hold, who affirm that it is not lawful for a Christian man to swear by any means. This will not the Scripture say. Against this fighteth the word of God. We are not forbidden to swear; but vainly, idly, falsely, and unrighteously to swear. Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vain, saith the Scripture. Mark that it is said, "in vain." A Christian man may lawfully swear, for the glory of God, and for the health both of himself and of others, so often as it shall make unto the honour and glory of God also. For the glory of God in all our oaths is most of all to be looked upon and considered. We ought not to desire any thing, except it maketh unto the glory of God, much less ought we to swear for it. I will make this matter more evident and plain by familiar examples.

If a Christian man were among the Jews, Turks, Saracens, or any other infidels, preaching the word of God purely unto them, and earnestly labouring to turn them from their idolatry, unto the true service of God—if they would by no means believe him, except he did swear by the name of the Lord his God whom he preached unto them that all is truth that he preacheth, he may lawfully, in this point, take the name of God unto witness, and swear that is truth that he preacheth. For this oath, thus taken and believed, turneth both unto the glory of God, and also unto the health of many souls, and therefore

it is not vain and idle, but righteous and godly. On this manner did God the Father; in the Old Testament, the patriarchs and prophets; in the New Testament, Christ and his apostles swear; and after this manner may all the saints and faithful of God swear. "He that perceiveth," saith Augustine, (Serm. i. de verbis Domini,) "that an oath ought not to be had as good, but in necessary things, let him refrain himself so much as he can, that he do not use it, except it be in necessity, when he sees that men are slow to believe that which is profitable for them to believe, except it be confirmed with an oath." Again, if it did so chance that two Christian men were at debate for some matter that is in controversy between them, and a third knew that the one did the other plain injury, and wrought against him contrary unto the rule of equity and justice, and so made declaration thereof unto the judge,—the judge, in this behalf, may lawfully require an oath of that witness-bearer; and he that so testifies may, with a right and good conscience, swear in this behalf; and this his oath is both righteous and godly. For by that is peace, amity, concord, and Christian charity brought again between those who were at debate, and the work of the devil is destroyed, that is to say, dissension and strife are taken away. An oath, saith St. Paul, is the end of all controversy. (Heb. vi.) Moreover, if heresy, treason, theft, manslaughter, whoredom, or any other notable vice were laid to a Christian man's charge, whereof he knoweth himself guiltless and nothing faulty, he may lawfully take an oath and swear unto the contrary, for the defence of his honest name and godly report; and this his oath is both righteous and godly. For it not only defends his own purity and innocency of life, but also it sets forth the glory of God. For as God is dishonoured through the wicked acts of those who profess him, so is he glorified through the good deeds of those who do both profess him, and also live according to their profession. The Greek orator Isocrates gives an excellent and very notable commandment concerning swearing, which I will here rehearse; that Christian men reading the words of a heathen man may be ashamed of their wickedness. His words are these, "Take an oath that is put unto thee for two causes, either that thou mayest deliver thyself from a filthy cause, or that thou mayest preserve thy friends that are in peril and danger. But for money look that thou swearest by no

god, although thou swearest righteously. For to some thou shalt seem to forswear thyself, and to some, to be desirous of money." What a saying is this of a Gentile! How little differeth this from the Holy Scriptures! How does this condemn those who, for slender advantage or a little money, will not only straightway swear, but also forswear themselves.

St. Augustine saith, "Doth not he take the name of God in vain, who for the love of a temporal thing (that is plain wickedness to a Christian man) takes God for a witness? The law hath forbidden that thou shouldest once covet; dost thou not covet, if thou bindest thyself with an oath, that thou mayest keep thy substance? Every creature is subject unto vanity; and is not this for vain things? Therefore he sweareth in vain, who, for creatures, calleth God a witness." As Jerome also saith, "The evangelical truth receiveth no oath, seeing every faithful word is for an oath." Hereunto pertains the saying of our golden-mouthed doctor, "The cause of an oath is this," saith he, that every one that sweareth, sweareth for this intent, that he may speak that which is truth. And therefore the Lord will have no difference between an oath and our speech. For as in an oath, it is not convenient that there be any falsehood or breaking of promise, so likewise in our words ought there to be no lie. For both perjury and lying are condemned with the pain of the divine judgment. Whosoever therefore speaketh the truth, sweareth, for it is written, A faithful witness will not lie."

Finally, so often as any magistrate or head officer requires an oath of us, for the preservation and maintenance of the common weal, or any other necessary and urgent cause, we ought gladly and willingly to swear, according to this commandment of Christ, Pay that to Cæsar which is due to Cæsar. (Matt. xxii.) But here are they who shall require the oath of the subjects to be admonished that it is their duty, before the others be sworn, to declare the matter with manifest words unto them, that they may well perceive, that they shall not swear in vain, but for weighty and necessary matters, concerning either the glory of God, or the profit of the common weal. For men ought not to be called forth to swear for every light trifle, nor yet to swear, as many do, they cannot tell what or wherefore.

The too much customable use of swearing, hath brought it so to pass, that as many care but little to swear, so care they not much to forswear themselves. The cause for which men should swear, ought not only to be good, but also necessary, and so openly proved unto them before they are brought unto their oath. This should make men to have the name of God in the higher reverence, to take an oath with a godlier mind, and to have the office of the head rulers in the greater estimation. For to make men swear by compulsion, before they know the matter, whether it be good, lawful, godly, necessary, or otherwise, let other men judge, that are better learned than I, whether it be agreeable to the word of God or not. But this dare I be bold to say, than an oath cannot be taken with too much reverence and advisement, inasmuch as by it God is called upon to be a witness in that behalf. Therefore ought men not to be compelled rashly to swear, lest by that means they provoke the vengeance of God, both against themselves, and those also who cause them so unadvisedly to swear, but should come unto their oath with great sobriety and deliberation.

Thus we see for what causes it is lawful for a Christian man to swear; whatsoever oath comes forth out of our mouth, if it be not for one of these causes aforesaid, it is damnable and plain sin. Therefore let all men take heed. Let no man from henceforth take the name of our Lord God in vain, for whosoever doth so, shall not surely escape unpunished. Let the rulers of the commonweal find some honest remedy, that the name of God be no more blasphemed among their subjects. Let them consider, how loth they are that they themselves should be evil spoken of and blasphemed. Let them weigh with themselves how much God excels them, and how far his dignity exceeds their dignity. If any man defaces their renown, he is punished straightway, and not without a cause. But how happens it that the Lord of all lords, and King of all kings is no more feared? How comes it to pass that his most holy and blessed name is so universally blasphemed, yea, and that freely, and without punishment? Were it not, think you, convenient that the civil magistrates should earnestly provide, that the name of God might have its due honour, and that it might no more be abused with abominable and unlawful oaths in their realms; but praised and magnified,

seeing that by it we obtain all our health and salvation? May God by his Holy Spirit vouchsafe to breathe into the hearts of all princes, kings, and rulers, that when they are godly assembled together for matters concerning the glory of God, and the public weal, they may also entreat of this thing in their synods, congregations, parliaments, councils, &c., that God may be glorified, and his most blessed name exalted of all nations from the east to the west. By this means shall they not only expel vice and make their realms flourish with virtue, unto the great glory of God, and the high consolation of all the faithful, but also they shall acquire and get to themselves a crown of immortal glory for ever and ever. Amen.

III. OF CARELESS MINISTERS.

Again, let all bishops, parsons, vicars, curates, parish-priests, and so many as are ministers of God's word, in all their sermons and exhortations unto the people, above all things, rebuke this abominable sin of swearing, and declare unto them how great an offence it is, and how the plague of God and his vengeance shall not depart from the houses of those who use this most detestable sin of swearing. Let them consider that they have been the chief occasion, both of this sin, and of all others, seeing they have not, according to their office diligently watched the Lord's flock, preached God's word, rebuked the wickedness of the people, told them their faults, exhorted them unto repentance and amendment of life. For when the preaching of God's word faileth, saith Solomon, then do the people perish, and go to havoc. (Prov. xxix.) Christ had much pity on the people when he saw that they were destitute and dispersed as sheep not having a shepherd. (Mat. ix.) For as sheep when they are without a shepherd wander they cannot tell whither, hang on every bush, are rent with every brier, and in danger to be devoured of the ravening wolf at all times; even so, likewise, those people that are without a preacher and teacher of God's word, run astray without order, hear the voice of every stranger, fall into all kinds of vicious abomination, are rent and torn with wicked spirits, and are ready at every hour to be swallowed up of Satan our old adversary who sleepeth not, but watcheth diligently, and walketh about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (1 Pet. v.) Surely

great is the damnation that hangeth over the heads of these sluggish shepherds. Christ, the High Priest, saith, I must preach the gospel, for I am sent for this purpose. (Mark i. iv.) What shall the baser sort of priests do then, I pray you? Shall they live in pleasure and idleness, in delicious fare and sluggishness? Doth not this also pertain unto them? Certainly if they will not meddle with "I must preach the gospel," they are likely to have no part of "Be merciful unto me." St. Paul also, the good bishop, said, Wo unto me, if I preach not the gospel. (1 Cor. ix.) And shall our rabbis think to escape without punishment, though they preach nothing at all? I fear that if they will not meddle with "Preach the gospel," they are like to cry another day, "Wo, Wo, Wo, how great are these darknesses!"

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, with all the prophets and apostles, call upon priests to preach the Holy Scriptures, exhorting them to be diligent in the matter. God the Father saith, Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice as a trumpet; show the people their sins, and declare unto them their wickedness. (Isa. lviii.) Again, he saith, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen upon thy walls, they shall not hold their peace neither night nor day. (Is. lxii.) Christ said to his apostles, Go throughout the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Matt. xxviii. Mark xvi. Luke xxiv.) St. Paul saith, Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, upon whom the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the congregation of God, whom he purchased with his blood. For I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And even among yourselves shall there arise men speaking perverse things, that they may lead away the disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three whole years I did not cease to monish every one of you, both day and night, even with tears. (Acts xx.) Again, he saith, Give attendance unto thyself and to doctrine, continue in these; for if thou doest so, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. (1 Tim. iv.) Preach the word; be fervent, be it in time or out of time, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all softness and doctrine. (2 Tim. iv.) Speak those things that become wholesome doctrine. (Titus ii.) St. Peter saith, Ye priests, see that ye feed Christ's flock which is among you, taking the oversight of them, not as though ye were

compelled thereto, but willingly; not for the desire of filthy lucre, but of a good mind; not as though ye were lords over the parishes, but that ye be an ensample to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive an incorruptible crown of glory. (1 Pet. v.)

These texts of Holy Scripture declare manifestly how fervent, busy, studious, and diligent, all true priests ought to be in the preaching of God's word. The men godly inspired knew right well, that so long as God's word is preached to the people, it must needs go well with the Christian religion, but if it once cease, then farewell all godliness, farewell all virtue and goodness. Of this thing, alas for pity, have we had experience many a year, unto our great discomfort and yet little redress. For many of the priests go forth to be as sluggish as ever they were, neither have they any godly care for Christ's flock committed unto them; so they may have the profits, they care for no more. So that by this means the sheep are like to die for want of food. But alas, how should they teach others when they themselves know nothing. They are, even as the prophet saith, dumb dogs, not once being able to bark. (Isa. lvi.) Many, again, of such there are, who are learned, and know their duty, and yet, I know not with what spirit moved, they hold their peace, they speak nothing; they see their sheep run astray before their faces, walk in all kinds of wickedness, and yet have they no pity. I wonder with what forcheads these men will appear before the High Priest and great Judge, Christ, at the dreadful day of judgment! I pray God they be not epicures both in living and judgment!

But let us hear what the holy and catholic doctors say unto this matter. Jerome saith, (In Lev. Dist. xxxvi.) "If any man will be a bishop, not only in name, but also in deserving, let him follow Moses, and let him follow Aaron. For what is said of them? That they went not from the tabernacle of the Lord. Therefore Moses was continually in the tabernacle of the Lord. What business had he there? Verily that he should either learn somewhat of God, or else teach the people. These are the two works of a bishop, that he should learn of God, by reading the divine Scriptures, and by having his continual meditation in them; or else teach the people; but yet ought he to teach those things that he has learned of God, and not of his own heart

or man's wisdom, but those things that the Holy Ghost teacheth. There is another work also that Moses doeth, he goeth not unto the wars, or fighteth not against the enemies. But what doth he? He prayeth, and while he prayeth, his people overcome; if he do once slack and let down his hands, then are his people overcome and chased away. Let the priest of the church, therefore, pray without ceasing, that the people who are under him, may overcome their invisible enemies the Amalekites, which are devils that do impugn and fight against them that will live godly in Christ." Oh how true, sweet, and godly are these words of the holy doctor! Here may all bishops and priests learn what their duty is; not to be idle, not to hunt and hawk, not to dice and card, not to banquet and live voluptuously, not to play the ruffling gallants, and to be entangled with worldly businesses, but to be continually in the tabernacle of the Lord; that is to say, to study and have their perpetual meditation in the Holy Scriptures, even both day and night, as David saith, (Psal. i.) And with all diligence to teach the people committed to their spiritual charge, not men's traditions, not their own fancies, but God's most holy word, even the Holy Scriptures, and such things whereof the Holy Ghost is the author. Let them, therefore, look well to their office. For if they are true bishops and priests, this is the work committed unto them, even continually to study the Holy Scriptures, and purely to preach them unto the people. If they leave this office undone, and do the works prescribed of man, so do they show themselves to be the servants, not of God, but of man. Let them therefore look what answer they will make to the high Judge and great Priest, Christ, at the terrible day of judgment. Moreover it is their duty fervently and without ceasing to pray for the people, that they may prevail against Satan, and his ministers that fight daily against them. How cold the prayers of many of them are, I will not now dispute. For they are more open to the whole world, than they need here to be rehearsed. When Moses held up his hands and prayed, his people did overcome. Whether our priests hold up their hands and pray as they ought, let other men judge. Of this am I sure, that since the world began, there never reigned more sin and abomination than there doth at this day; which is but a slender argument that we get the victory of our enemies. God give all bishops and

priests grace once to look upon their office diligently, that they may both earnestly study the Holy Scriptures, teach them sincerely unto the people, and continually occupy themselves in fervent prayers. Then shall it not only be well with Christ's flock, but also with themselves at the dreadful day of judgment, when they shall appear before the high Bishop Jesus Christ, and give account unto him of their behaviour in the office that was committed unto them in this world.

Augustine (in Aggeum) also saith, "Consider that it is the office of priests, when they are demanded concerning the law, to answer. If he be a priest, let him know the law of the Lord; if he knoweth not the law of the Lord, he declares evidently that he is no priest. For it pertains unto the Lord's priest to know the law, and when he is asked, to make answer of the law." What will a great number of our priests say to these words of Augustine? I fear much that if he were not so ancient a doctor, and a saint already approved by the church, surely many priests for madness would nothing fear to accuse him of heresy, and to affirm that he preacheth heretical doctrine. So jeopardous a thing at this time is it, to speak against these ignorant rabbis, who, although they know nothing, yet will they be judges over all men, and ready straightway to condemn them! It is not the long robe, the flaring tippet about the neck, the anointing of the fingers, the broad shaving of the crown, that make the priest, but knowledge and skill in the law of the Lord, and so to be called unto priesthood.

The prophet Malachi saith, The lips of the priest keep knowledge, and at his mouth shall they require the law, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. So saith Augustine here, that priests ought to be so well learned in the Holy Scriptures, that when any man demandeth a question of them, concerning the law of God, they should be able to answer. "If he be a priest," saith he, "let him know the law of the Lord. If he knoweth not the law of the Lord, he declares evidently that he is no priest."

Augustine here affirms, that he only is a priest who has knowledge in the law of the Lord. "If knowledge is wanting, it is an evident argument, that there is no priest." It is happy that Augustine is gone, and a saint, for if he were now alive, and a bishop again, as he was in times

past, and should go on a visitation throughout the diocese, I think surely he would depose a great sort of priests, as men more fit for the cart* than for the church. For Augustine measured all priesthood by knowledge. "It pertains unto the Lord's priest," saith he, "to know the law, and when he is demanded, to make answer of the law." He may be a priest of Baal, of the Romish bishop, and of man, but of the Lord he cannot be, except he have knowledge. If any man feels himself grieved at this matter, and cannot abide his diseased back thus to be rubbed, let him know that they are not my words, but the words of Augustine, a man in his time, not only godly inspired, and exeellently learned, but also of great authority before the world. I only rehearse his and other holy doctors' words, because I would gladly have men to do truly their office, and to set this saying of the psalmist ever before their eyes, Be not like a horse and a mule, which have no understanding. (Psalm xxxii.) For ignorance in all men is to be abhorred, but in priests chiefly.

If after the mind of the apostle Paul, Jerome saith, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God, it follows well, that he who knows not the Scriptures, knows not the power of God, and the wisdom of him. For the ignoranee of the Scriptures is the ignorance of Christ. Leo, the bishop, saith, "If ignorance seemeth intolerable, even in laymen, how much more is it worthy neither of exeuse nor of forgiveness in them that bear rule!" I therefore desire all priests that be good and virtuous, and tender the glory of God, and the salvation both of their own and other Christian men's souls, that they will not be displeased with these words, which come from a breast that wishes well unto them all, but earnestly look upon their office better, cast away blind ignorance, study for

* Persons of unclean lives were carried through the streets fastened upon a cart, as a public disgrace. A Romish priest, named Snowdel, parson of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, who said the first mass in London after the accession of queen Mary, was carted through Cheapside, November 24, 1553, for his shameless licentious conduct. Strype, in his Memorials, (chap. xii.) relates many instances of the abominations committed by the Romish priests, from Bale and other authorities. He says, the church was then plentifully furnished with ignorant scandalous priests, who quarrelled with their parishioners for purification pence, eggs on Good Friday, the four offerings, dirge-groats, and such like, the latter being their usual reward for singing a mass to benefit a soul in purgatory. They were notorious for their diligence in searching for, and informing against, the Protestants.

the knowledge of Holy Scriptures, and labour with all main to do that which God requireth of them.

Moreover Gregory saith, (Ad Venant. Episcop.) "The shepherd who does not rebuke them that offend, without doubt he slayeth them by holding his peace." Again, he saith, (in Ezech. Hom. ix.) "We are called priests; besides these evils that we have of our own, we add also other men's deaths. For we slay so many as we see daily go unto death, and yet are sluggish and hold our peace." Here is a terrible saying. They who are appointed to save Christian men's souls, do cruelly slay them by their negligence and holding their peace. O that the bishops of every diocese would diligently look upon this matter, the easier much should be their account at the dreadful day of judgment. May the Holy Ghost breathe it into their minds. In the Council of Toledo, we read on this manner: "Ignorance, the mother of all errors, is most of all to be eschewed in the priests of God, who have taken upon them the office of teaching among the people of God." Priests are warned to read the Holy Scriptures; as Paul the apostle saith unto Timothy, Give attendance to reading and exhortation, and learning, and continue always in these. (1 Tim. iv.) Let priests therefore know the Holy Scriptures and canons, and let all their work, business, and travail consist in preaching and doctrine, and let them edify all men so well with the knowledge of faith, as with the good information of works. Oh godly decree! Here may all priests learn that their work consists in preaching and doctrine, in edifying the people, and in giving them godly examples of virtuous living. God send us more such councils.

Pope Nicholas writes on this manner, (Dist. xliii.) "The distribution of the heavenly seed is enjoined us; wo therefore, be unto us, if we do not sprinkle it abroad! Wo be unto us, if we hold our peace!" Here is eternal damnation threatened to priests if they do not sow abroad the heavenly seed of God's word in the fields of Christian men's hearts. Let them look well to their office, for they stand in a perilous state. Many of them think it a great pleasure to receive yearly so great profits of their benefices, but let them remember the common proverb, "Sweet meat must have sour sauce." Wo be to you, saith Christ, that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep! Wo be to you that be filled, for ye shall hunger! Wo be to you rich

men, which have your consolation! Wo be to you, when all men praise you! (Luke vi.)

Platina, in the life of pope Innocent the sixth, writes on this manner: "Innocent the sixth gave the ecclesiastical benefices unto such priests only as were thoroughly proved and tried, both in life and learning. And he made a constitution that all prelates, and as many as had benefices, should go home to their own parishes under pain of cursing. For he said that no hireling, but the very own shepherd, ought to keep his own sheep." Here was a wonderful godly constitution! Would that it were observed throughout all Christendom; then should Christ's flock be much better fed than they are at this time. Then should not the parsons and vicars be absent from their benefices as they are now-a-days. Then should the goods of the parishes be spent among the parishioners, and not abroad as they are now-a-days, no man can tell whereabout. Then should the poor people be better looked upon. Then should priests be more diligent to maintain hospitality. Then should the benefieed men more quietly apply their minds unto the study of Holy Scriptures, and other godly meditations. Then should fervent love, which is now almost universally decayed, spring up anew again between the priests and the laymen. Then should priests be honoured as fathers, and laymen count themselves as their children, giving them reverence and double honour, as the Scripture commands. (1 Tim. v.) Then should God's word flourish, and the glory of God be sought of all men. Ah! shall we not once see this joyful day in England? When might it ever be brought to pass better and more conveniently than now, under this our most excellent king, who hitherto has both so godly and so prosperously travailed in the building again of our Lord God's temple; in throwing down the works of hypocrisy, superstition, and idolatry, like another Hezekiah, and in setting up again the pure and Christian religion? Lord grant that it may come to pass, yea, and that shortly.

Thus we see, both by the Holy Scriptures, the ancient doctors, and the godly old councils, how greatly all bishops and priests ought to be occupied in studying and preaching God's word. But to this, their godly preaching, they must also join a virtuous and pure life, lest they edify not so much with their preaching, as they destroy with their

wicked living. It is a shame for a physician to be so diseased, that it may justly be said to him, Physician, heal thyself. God said to the sinner, Why dost thou preach my laws, and take my testament into thy mouth? Thou hast hated to be reformed, and thou hast cast away my words behind thee. If thou sawest a thief, thou rannest with him, and with adulterers didst thou lay thy portion. Thy mouth did abound with cursed speaking, and thy tongue did craftily couple together deceits. Thou didst sit and speak against thy brother, and against thy mother's son didst thou lay a stumbling-block. These things hast thou done, and yet have I holden my peace. Thou wickedly thoughtest that I would be like unto thee; but I will reprove thee, and come face to face against thee. O understand these things, ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none that can deliver you. (Psalm l.) St. Paul also saith, Thou that teachest another, teachest not thyself. Thou that preachest that men should not steal, stealest thyself. Thou that sayest that adultery should not be committed, playest the adulterer thyself. Thou that abhorrest images, robbest God of his honour thyself. Thou that gloriest of the law, through the breaking of the law dishonourest God. For the name of God is evil spoken of among the Gentiles through you. (Rom. ii.)

Of these things it is evident that it is not sufficient for priests to preach God's word, except they also lead a virtuous and godly life. Whosoever doeth and teacheth, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, (Matt. v.) saith the Scripture. Christ not only calls priests the salt of the earth, but also the light of the world. With their preaching they season the people; but with their light of godly conversation they show men how they ought to walk and live. There immediately is it subjoined, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Be an example of the faithful, saith Paul, in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith. Keep thyself pure. Study to show thyself commendable to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. (1 Tim. v.; 2 Tim. ii.) "He that preaches Christ," saith Ambrose, (in Serm. de jejunio,) "ought to show himself wholly estranged from all kinds of vices." John Chrysostom (in Matt.) also saith, It is a great shame for priests, and for such as are of the

clergy, when laymen are found more faithful, and more righteous, than they are! How can it be otherwise than a shame for them to be inferior to the lay people, whom to be like unto them, it is also a shame?" Again, Gregory (in Pastoral) saith, "The light of the flock is the flame of the shepherd. For it becomes the Lord's shepherd and a priest to shine in manners and living, that in him, as in the glass of their light, the people that are committed unto him, may both discern what they should follow, and also see what they should correct and amend." Hereof is it evident, what great purity and innocency of life ought to be in priests, that their life may correspond, and in all points answer to their preaching.

But here is answer to be made to the unsavoury talk of certain men now-a-days, who, because they see the manners of the preachers not agreeable in all points to their sermons, fall at defiance with God's word, blaspheme it as heresy, rail upon the preachers, and absent themselves from the hearing of all godly exhortations, warnings, and counsels. These persons hinder no man so much as themselves. They may well be compared to a foolish man who comes unto the market to buy meat, but when he beholds the butcher, and perceives him to have some deformity in his face, as one of his eyes to be out, or to be bald, or else to hold his neck awry, he goes straight home again, and chooses rather to die for hunger, than he will buy meat of such a butcher, although the meat be never so pure, clean, commestible,* and wholesome!

But let us hear what the Holy Scripture saith. In the chair of Moses, sit scribes and pharisees. All, therefore, that they command you to keep, look that you keep and do, but according to their works, do ye not. For they say, but they do not. (Matt. xxiii.) Here Christ commands us not to abstain from the hearing of God's word, though they be ever so wicked and evil that preach it. For who were more ungodly and greater enemies to Christ than the scribes and pharisees, yet Christ commands to hear them, so long as they sit in the chair of Moses. To sit in the chair of Moses is truly and sincerely to preach those things that Moses did, to interpret the law according to the right vein of the Holy Scripture, and only to seek the glory of God, and the profit of the faithful. So long

* Proper for food.

as they that are preachers do this, they are to be heard whatever they may be.

For it is not the preacher to whom we must principally have respect, but to the word of God. Neither do we come into the temple to gaze upon the preacher, but to hear the Holy Scriptures declared, and so learn to lead a godly life. If he were one of the ministers of Satan, yea Satan himself, that preached, so long as he brings in "it is written," so long as he teaches purely the divine Scripture, without wresting or corrupting of the same, he is to be heard. We ought not so greatly to mark the teacher, as that which is taught. If he teaches well, it is ours, and we have that we came for; if he lives well, it is his own, and he shall receive the reward.

But let us hear what Chrysostom (in Matt. cap. xxiii.) saith to this matter. "If the priests live well, it is their advantage, but if they teach well, it is yours. Be not curious to boult out that which pertains unto another man. For oftentimes good learning comes forth from an evil man, as evil earth bringeth forth precious gold. Is precious gold despised for the vile earth? Therefore, as the gold is chosen, and the earth forsaken, so likewise, take you the learning, and leave the manners." Again, he saith, "Let us take the doctrine, but not the manners. Herbs are not necessary for the bees, but the flowers are. So you, likewise, gather the flowers of doctrine, and leave their fashions of living." Here this holy doctor willeth us not to despise the word, though the preacher be evil. Let us take what is ours, and let go that which is his. The doctrine is ours, the life is his. I had rather have a sincere preacher of God's word who shall declare Christ unto me purely, rebuke my sinful living, comfort me with the sweet promises of God, show me how I ought to institute my life according to the will of God, &c. although his manners may be somewhat different from his preaching, than to have a wicked papist, a pestilent pharisee, and a superstitious hypocrite, who shall outwardly, like a crafty fox, pretend a certain gravity, and a popeholy manner of living, and yet corrupt the Holy Scriptures, confound God's word with men's traditions, lead the people into superstitious errors, flatter the hearers, preach for lucre, mangle the doctrine of Christ, and obscure the way of truth. Of such Christ warns us to take heed, in the gospel of Matthew, saying, Beware of false prophets, which come unto

you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (Matt. vii.) Against these Christ, in another place, thundereth, saying, Wo be to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like painted sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of bones of dead men, and of all filthiness. So ye likewise appear outwardly righteous to men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. (Matt. xxiii.) Again, Ye are they that justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts. For that which seemeth praiseworthy before men, is abominable before God. (Luke xvi.) Therefore, so long as the preacher sitteth in the chair of Moses, and not in the chair of pestilence, he is to be heard for the word's sake, be his life ever so wicked and ungodly.

Notwithstanding, I exhort all Christian preachers, and so many as unfeignedly tender the glory of God, and the promotion of his most blessed word, that they do their endeavour, not only to set forth God's truth in word and tongue, but also in work and verity. Let them be the same in life that they profess in word. "For he takes upon him the name of a Christian man in vain," saith Augustine, "who follows not Christ. For what does it profit thee to be called that which thou art not, and to usurp a strange name? If thou hast a pleasure to be a Christian man, do those things that pertain unto Christianity, and even then hardly take upon thee the name of a Christian." Ambrose also saith, (in Serm. de Abraham,) It is a shameful lie, for any man to call himself a Christian man, and not to do the works of Christ. Hereto pertaineth the saying of Cyprian, (De. xii. abusionibus,) "No man is truly called a Christian but he which laboureth as much as lies in his power, to show himself conformable and like to Christ in his manners and conversation." He that saith he dwelleth in Christ, saith St. John, ought to walk as he hath walked. (1 John ii.) Seeing, then, that so great purity and innocency of life is required of all men that profess Christ, surely in priests, and in them that are preachers of God's word, it ought to excel above all others. Men light not a candle to put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, and it shineth to as many as are in the house. (Mark iv.) So, likewise, priests are not called unto the office of preaching, that their conversation should be dark and without light, but that it should be garnished

with godly virtues and good works, that it may light so many as are in the house of God. Christ, the High Priest and everlasting Bishop, grant it may be so.

CONCLUSION.

But, as I may return unto our matter of swearing; let them that be preachers, I say, above all things rebuke this abominable sin of swearing, and declare unto the people what a great offence it is, and how the plagues of God, and his vengeance, shall not depart from the houses of those who use this most detestable sin of swearing.

Furthermore, let all fathers and mothers give earnest diligence, that their children may, from their very cradles, learn to worship and honour the most blessed name of God, and never have it in their mouths without great reverence. Let them not be suffered by any means to swear by God, or by any of his creatures, but let their communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay. (Matt. v.; James v.) If they at any time swear, let them first of all be admonished of their fault, and told how great an offence it is before God wickedly and vainly to swear. If they will not so amend, let the parents punish them sharply. Better were it that their bodies, in this world, should suffer a little pain, than, after this life, to have both their bodies and souls cast into hell-fire. If all fathers and mothers will thus diligently watch over their children, it shall cause them, not only not to be defiled with the most grievous sin of swearing, but also that the most holy name of God shall be had in high reverence, great estimation, and perpetual honour for ever after, so long as they live. But above all things, let the parents themselves be an ensample in this behalf unto their children, and show evermore such reverence unto the name of God, that the younglings may well perceive that it is no vain thing that they are taught.

Let all masters and mistresses, and so many as have servants under their dominion, provide that by no means they suffer their servants at any time to swear, either by God, or by any of his creatures. Let them show unto them what a great danger it is, and how that the vengeance of God shall not depart from those houses where swearers are; neither can there any thing prosper, but all things must needs go to havoc. Let them also teach them to have the name of God in so great honour and reverence, that it never

be named among them but honourably and reverently. Let them at the least put off their caps so oft as they name God, Christ, or any part of his most precious body. If any of their servants will not leave their swearing, and learn to have the name of God in honour, then let them be put out of their houses, lest they bring the vengeance of God upon so many as are in their company. For as the godliness of one man is many times the occasion that God is merciful to many, so is the wickedness of one man oftentimes the cause that many are punished. Therefore, it is not enough that the masters and the mistresses of the house be virtuous and godly, except the servants be so likewise. It becomes a master to have servants like unto his own manners, lest his goodness profit not so much in the right institution of his family, as the wickedness of the other destroys. It is well when one planteth and another watereth, but it is evil when one planteth and another plucketh up. Mine eyes are unto the faithful of the earth, that they may dwell with me, saith David, and whoso leadeth a godly life, he shall be my servant. There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. (Psalm ci.) Would God all masters were of this mind.

Let all men of occupation* abstain from swearing in their buying and selling. For it is a shame that the name of God should be esteemed among Christian men of so small price, that, for the value of a little temporal advantage and worldly lucre, men should abuse it, and take it in vain. Wo be to that man, who, for his own private lucre, blasphemes the name of God, or any of his creatures. There ought to be such great sincerity and faith among Christian men, that there should need no oaths in their bargains and worldly business. A Christian man's word ought to be better and surer than any obligation. God grant that we may once see this come to pass in England! Let them that swear, because it is the custom so to do, leave their swearing, and no more follow the wicked custom, but the truth of God's word which saith, Swear not at all. Let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay. (Matt. v.) Let those who glory and rejoice so much in their swearing, that they will take upon them to maintain it by the Scripture, abstain from their idle oaths, and wrest no more the Holy Scripture, lest they, following the man-

* Business.

ners of Satan, receive a reward worthy their wickedness. Matt. iv.

Let those who say, Though we swear, yet we think no harm, leave their swearing, and remember that they shall give account at the dreadful day of judgment for every idle word they have spoken, so that they shall not escape unpunished for their idle oaths. Let those who say, Few or none will believe us, except we swear, rather meddle with few or none, than they should transgress the commandment of God, and bring damnation upon their own heads.

To conclude; let all oaths be taken away from the midst of Christian men, except they be taken for those causes which I have expressed before. If we will thus do, we shall easily eschew the most detestable vice of perjury, and live friendly together in all truth, sincerity, and faith, as it becomes saints, and so many as profess Christ. For he that will not swear, will not lightly swear falsely, and be forsworn. And that we may be the more encouraged to forsake all vain and idle oaths, let us remember that God, who is the everlasting truth, hath promised, that he will glorify those who honour him, and have his name in reverence. Again, that those shall come unto dishonour and a shameful end, who despise him and blaspheme his most holy name. Now if we would that God glorify us, that is to say, be our good Lord, defend, preserve, keep, and govern us, bless us, lighten his gracious countenance upon us, send us all things necessary for our living in this present world, and after this life give us eternal glory —then is it convenient that we do not abuse the name of God by our vain and unrighteous oaths, but always laud, praise, commend, magnify, and bless it, call upon it, fly unto it, as unto an holy anchor, in all our adversity, and never have it in our mouths but with high reverence and great honour. If we do the contrary, that is to say, blaspheme his most holy name, then shall we undoubtedly come unto dishonour and a shameful end. In this world, the plague and vengeance of God shall not go away from our houses; we shall be stricken with many grievous diseases in our bodies; our goods and cattle, yea, and all that ever we have, shall come to nought. Our kind of living shall be despised by all good men; our death shall be painful, miserable, and wretched; and after these so great and manifold plagues, we may be sure, for our wicked swearing, to be

east into hell-fire, where the flames of it shall never be quenched, where weeping and gnashing of teeth shall be, where the worm that shall gnaw our conscienees shall never die. Isa. lxvi.; Mark ix.

Therefore, I beseech all Christian men, by the tender mereies of God, and by the most preeious blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whereby alone we are redeemed, made pure and delivered from all our sins, that they, from heneeforth, leave their abominable swearing, either by God, or by any of his creatures. Let them never take God to witness, exeept it be in a neeessary and earnest matter, I mean, sueh a matter as maketh unto the glory of God. Let their eommunication be yea, yea; nay, nay. Let sueh great sineerity, truth, and faith, reign among them, that one may believe another without an oath, even by a word. Let them have God in such reverenee and honour, and so order their tongues in this world unto the glory of God, that after this life, through the merey of God, they may be found worthy to be in the number of those blessed spirits, who, without eeasing, sing perpetual praises to the most holy name of God on this manner: Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty, righteous and true are thy ways, O king of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the glory and honour and power, for thou hast made all things, and for thy will they are and were made. To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honour, and glory and power, world without end.

AMEN.

SAY NOT BUT THAT YE ARE WARNED.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

Certain ancient, godly, and politic Laws for the punishment of Swearing, gathered out of divers authors.

The Divine Law (Levitieus xxiv.) saith, He that blaspheneth the name of the Lord, he shall die for it. All the multitude shall stone him to death; whether he be citizen or stranger, if he blaspheme the name of the Lord, let him die the death.

This law was executed upon the son of a certain Israelitish woman, because he blasphemed the name of the Lord. He was first put in prison, and afterwards, at the commandment of God, he was stoned unto death.

Walden relates, that king Henry the fifth made a statute for swearers in his own palace, that if he were a duke that did swear, he should forfeit for every time forty shillings to the aiding of poor people. If he were a lord or baron, twenty shillings. If he were a knight or an esquire, ten shillings. If he were a yeoman, twenty pence. If he were a page, or a lackey, or a slave, to be scourged naked, either with a rod, or else with a whip.

King Edmond made this law; That they which were proved once to be falsely forsworn, should for ever be separated from God's congregation.

Hector Boetius says, Donald, king of Scotland, made this law within his land; that all perjurers and common swearers should have their lips seared with a burning hot iron.

This law aforesaid did Lewis, king of France, enact also, and put it once in execution, at Paris, upon a citizen there, for blaspheming the name of Christ, for example of others, and so caused it to be proclaimed throughout his realm, for a general punishment.

Vincent relates, that Philip, king of France, whomsoever he perceived to blaspheme the name of God, either in taverns, or any where else; yea, although he were a great man of dignity, commanded that he should be drowned; and caused a strong act to be made of it a little before his death, and left it unto his successors.

James Major says, Philip, earl of Flanders, made this institution within his earldom, in the year of our Lord 1178; that he who did forswear himself should lose his life and goods.

Maximilian, the emperor, made also a decree; that whosoever he were that was a common swearer, should, for the first time, lose a mark, (13*s.* 4*d.*) And if he were not content with that, he should lose his head. Which act, he and the nobility of the empire commanded to be published four times in the year; at Easter, Whitsuntide, Assumption of our lady, as they called it, and Christmas. See the chronicles of memorable things.

The law of the Egyptians was, that no swearing should be used among them at all, except it were for a weighty cause. If any were found to be perjured, the same should lose his head. See Bœmus.

The law of the Scythians was, that if any among them could be proved to be a notable swearer, or such a one as would forswear himself, the same being convicted of the fault, should not only lose his head, but his goods also, which they should have who proved him perjured.

The Romans had a law, that all such as were found to be perjured, should be thrown down headlong from the top of a high rock, called the Tarpeian. See the law of the twelve tables.

The third Commandment saith, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

The wise man saith, Let not thy mouth be accustomed to swear, for in it there are many faults, &c. As a servant who is oft punished cannot be without some sore, even so whatsoever he be that sweareth, and nameth God (in vain) shall not be clean purged from sin. A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with wickedness, and the plague shall never go from his house.

The words of the swearer bring death, (God grant that it be not found in the house of Jacob) but they that fear God, eschew all such, and lie not weltering in sin.

The counsel of Josephus is this: that he which blasphemeth God, and irreverently useth his name, should be stoned unto death, and then hanged up by the space of

one day, and so taken down, and buried without any kind of honour. Lib. iv. Ant. Cap. vi.

Divers other most noble princes made divers other most holy laws for the eschewing of customary swearing and perjury. Would that some method might be devised, for the abolishing and putting away of the most wicked and detestable custom of swearing, by every prince, as he shall think most convenient for the state of his realm. Laws are made and penalties appointed for divers mean things, which only concern worldly matters; why then do not Christian princes also make laws, acts, and decrees, for the glory of God, that his name may be had in honour and reverence, as most worthy of all it is! Worldly matters may not so be esteemed, that things pertaining to the glory of God and the salvation of Christian men's souls shall be neglected. For rulers are appointed of God, not only to look upon mundane and worldly, but also upon divine and spiritual matters. And it is their duty, no less to tender the glory of God, and to make acts concerning the same, than to see that public tranquillity, and all things decent and comely for an honest outward order, be maintained, preserved, and kept. And as they are the supreme heads and chief rulers of the spirituality and temporality, so ought they to travail in spiritual no less than in temporal matters. Look what enormities, wickednesses, ungodly customs, superstitious and unrighteous manners, &c. reign in realms. All these ought to be abolished, and put away by the worldly potentates and earthly rulers. God grant that we may see it shortly, not only in this realm, but in the kingdoms of so many as profess Christ. Amen.*

Remedies against Swearing.

If thou art bent to leave the wicked custom of swearing,

* The laws of England now in force, enact, that if any person shall profanely curse, or swear, and be convicted thereof before a justice on the oath of one witness, he shall forfeit, if a day labourer, common soldier, or seaman, one shilling; every other person under the degree of a gentleman, two shillings; every person of or above the degree of a gentleman, five shillings; for a second offence after conviction, each shall forfeit double, and for every subsequent offence treble the above-mentioned sums. Every constable that hears a person curse or swear is required to prosecute, or is liable to a penalty of forty shillings.

First, Pray fervently unto God, that he will take away thy heart, which is defiled in such sort, and so hardened with the customable usage of sinning, that there can enter no virtue nor godliness into it.

Secondly, Desire him, for his great mercy's sake, to create in thee a new heart, and to pour his Spirit so abundantly into thy breast, that by the influence of it thou mayest be able to drink in virtue, and all that ever shall be pleasant to the divine majesty.

Thirdly, Be so at defiance with all vice and sin, that by no means at any time thou have pleasure either to think, hear, or talk of it; so far let it be from thee to meddle any thing at all with it, in thought, word, or deed.

Fourthly, Set this saying of Christ ever before thine eyes, that at the day of judgment account shall be given of every idle word that is spoken. This shall bring unto thy remembrance how grievous an account shall be required of them that customably swear, vainly usurp the name of God, blaspheme God, are falsely forsworn, &c.

Fifthly, That thou mayest the more easily eschew swearing, fly the company of them that use customably to swear, or have a pleasure to interlace their talk with blasphemous oaths. And whatsoever thou hatest in others, look that by no means thou do the same.

Sixthly, Busy thyself continually in giving praises unto God, and setting forth the glory of his name. Delight thou in nothing so much as in doing those things that make unto the advancement of the divine majesty. This shall not a little make unto the putting away of swearing, and make thee to have a mouth which shall be the organ and instrument of the Holy Ghost, to set forth and publish the glory of God.

Finally, let nothing come forth of thy mouth until it be thoroughly considered in thy breast, as Epictetus, the Greek philosopher warns; and so order both thy tongue and thine acts in all thy conversation, that it never repent thee afterward of any thing that thou hast done. So shalt thou not only eschew the damnable custom of swearing, but also garnish thy life with all kinds of virtues, unto the great glory of God, and the health of thy soul.

SO BE IT.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

THE

CASTLE OF COMFORT;

IN WHICH IS EVIDENTLY PROVED, THAT GOD ALONE ABSOLVETH AND FREELY FORGIVETH THE SINS OF SO MANY AS UNFEIGNEDLY REPENT AND TURN UNTO HIM.

COMPILED

BY THOMAS BECON.

THE NAME OF THE LORD IS A STRONG CASTLE, UNTO THAT DOTH THE RIGHTEOUS RUN, AND HE SHALL BE PRESERVED.—PROVERBS XVIII.

1549.

I am he only that for mine own self's sake do away thine offences, and forget thy sins, so that I will never think upon them.—Isaiah xliii.

If any man be thirsty, let him come unto me and drink.—John vii.

O taste and see, how sweet the Lord is; blessed is that man that putteth his trust in him.—Psalm xxxiv.

DEDICATION.

To the most honourable and virtuous lady, Maria, duchess of Richmond, her grace, Thomas Becon wisheth from God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, a faithful perseverance in God's most holy word unto the end.

It was not without a great cause, most godly lady, that the holy apostle, saint Paul, desired the Thessalonians to hold fast the doctrine that he had taught them before, and not suddenly to be moved from their knowledge and understanding, nor to be troubled, neither by spirit, neither by words, nor yet by letter. For he undoubtedly did before see, by the revelation of God's Spirit, that there should arise false anointed, and false preachers, which should work great miracles and wonders, insomuch, that if it were possible, the very elect and chosen people of God should be brought into error. Which also should say, Behold here is Christ, or there is Christ, bringing in damnable sects, and utterly denying the Lord that bought them; as Peter saith, He considered the imbecility, weakness, and childish hearts of men, which, except they are corroborated* and fortified with the strength of God's Spirit, are soon carried about with divers and strange learnings, embracing no less greedily that which is to themselves noisome and pestiferous, than that which is good and profitable, as we at this present time see daily before our eyes. Therefore, this most excellent apostle desired the Thessalonians, (yea, and so many of us as profess Christ unfeignedly,) to persevere and abide in the word of truth, even unto the end, that we may be saved; and not lightly to be moved with the subtle and crafty persuasions of them that teach weak and beggarly traditions with human constitutions; which give heed to fables and men's commandments, that turn away the followers of them from the truth; which profess that they know God, but with their deeds they deny him, insomuch

* Strengthened.

as they are abominable and disobedient, yea, and unmeet to all good works; which love their own pleasures more than God, having an outer appearance of godly living, but denying the power thereof; which run from house to house, and bring into bondage both men and women laden with sin; which are led with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come unto the knowledge of the truth; which are enemies of the cross of Christ; which call that which is evil good, and that which is good evil, &c.; in short, which are ravening wolves, not sparing the flock. Does the world want these enemies of God's glory? Have not we also need to take heed unto the aforesaid wholesome admonition of the holy apostle, saint Paul? Does not the world at this day nourish such ungodly monsters? What age has been without them since the beginning of the world? What need I to speak of that great harlot of Babylon, the mother of fornications and abominations of the earth, which hath made drunken with the wine of the wrath of her harlotry all the nations of the earth; yea, the very kings and rulers of the earth have played the adulterers with her. (Rev. xviii.) And would God, that as the name of this Babylonical strumpet is exiled out of men's mouths, and erased out of books among us, so in like manner her whoredom, I mean, the popish and devilish decrees, which fight against the manifest word of God, might once be utterly exiled, banished, and for ever driven away from the bounds of Christendom; that all things in the Christian public weal, both in this and in foreign realms, might be instituted, ordered, and appointed, according to the verity of Christ's most blessed gospel. But besides this monstrous beast, are there risen not a few, which are plain antichrists, and daily labour to obscure the glory of God.

No marvel, seeing that in the apostles' time, blessed John confessed that there were many antichrists and false prophets. What need I to speak of them which teach that Christ by his precious death delivered us only from original sin? Which teach that man is justified by his own works, and not by the faith alone that he hath in Christ's most blessed death? Which teach that by observing men's traditions everlasting life is gotten? Which teach that external ceremonies justify and put away sin? Which teach that man is able of his own strength to fulfil the law, and to satisfy the justice of God? Which teach that our prayers cannot be heard, without the intercession of others?

Which teach that all honour pertaineth not to God alone? Which teach that the blood of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, is not a sufficient cleansing for all our sins, except we be broiled, boiled, and parboiled, in the pope's furnace?* Which teach that the Lord Christ gave not himself so plenteously a sweet smelling sacrifice to God the Father for us, that with the one oblation of his most blessed body, he hath made them perfect for evermore that are sanctified? Which teach that God alone forgiveth not sin, but sinful man also?

Are not these very antichrists; enemies of the cross of Christ; defacers of God's glory; false anointed; false preachers; ravening wolves; clouds without water; trees without fruit; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever; men-pleasers, having men in great reverence for advantage sake; cursed children, which have forsaken the right way and are gone astray? These are they, doubtless, of whom both Christ and his apostles bid us take heed, in so many places of the Holy Scriptures. Against these ought all men to fight that tender† the glory of God. To confound these antichrists ought we to sell wallet, scrip, coat, with all that ever we have, and to buy us a sword, I mean the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And to this end, that I may provoke others valiantly and boldly to fight against these aforesaid antichrists, I, according to the talent given unto me, have taken upon me to wrestle with these wicked men, which believe and teach that God alone does not forgive sin, but man also can forgive with the same power and like authority. Which thing I take in hand the more gladly, because I see that this kind of doctrine is a great defacing of God's glory, and that it throws many into great danger, forasmuch as they look for that at the hand of man which only is the gift of God; yea, it encourages not a few to live dissolutely, and without the fear of God, seeing they are persuaded that if the priest layeth his hand once upon their head, and say, "Ego absolvo te,"‡ they are quite delivered from their sinful burden. And though they return straightway unto their filthy vomit, what matters it, "Ego absolvo te" will despatch all together. If any man sitteth in the temple

* Purgatory. † Care for. ‡ I absolve thee.

of God, and boasteth himself as God, surely they do it who take upon them the office of God, that is, to remit and forgive sin.* But they shall be slain with the breath of the Lord's mouth.

The order which I will observe in the treatise following, is this: *First*, I will prove with manifest Scriptures, that God alone forgiveth sin. *Secondly*, That the priest is but a minister appointed of God, to declare free remission of sins to the truly penitent—to declare, I say, and not to forgive. *Thirdly*, I will answer to the objections of the adversaries, and utterly wipe them away, restoring the Scriptures to their native sense. *Fourthly*, Lest I should seem to despise the true and Christian absolution of a faithful minister, and the use of the keys, which consists in preaching, I will express my mind concerning them also, so that to any indifferent† person, I doubt not, but that my judgment shall appear godly, and conformable to the true vein of the Holy Scriptures. This little treatise, most virtuous lady, I send unto your grace, as a testimony of my ready bent good will, and serviceable heart towards your grace, being provoked hereunto through your exceeding love and fervent zeal, which your most honourable ladyship bears, both toward the word of God and the true professors of the same; most humbly beseeching your grace to take in good part this my rude and simple gift.

May God, who by his Holy Spirit hath wrought in your heart this entire love toward the gospel of his Son, Christ Jesus, also bring forth in your grace plenteousness of good works, unto the glory of his blessed name, and the profit of his holy congregation.

Amen.

Your grace's most humble

and faithful orator,

THOMAS BECON.

* Erasmus relates, that among the questions seriously argued in the schools, was the following: "Whether the pope be not more merciful than Christ was; since we do not read that Christ ever recalled any from the pains of purgatory." Erasm. annot in N. T. 1 Tim. c. i.

† Impartial.

THE

CASTLE OF COMFORT.

That God alone absolveth the truly penitent, and only forgiveth the sins of so many as with unfeigned faith and hearty repentance convert, turn, and flee unto his mercy, is manifestly proved by divers texts of Holy Scripture. First, let us hear what God himself saith by the prophet Isaiah; I am he, yea, I am he indeed, which putteth away thy sins, yea, and that for mine own sake, and I will remember thy sins no more. Call to remembrance, and let us be judged together. Tell, if thou hast anything that thou mayest be justified. Thy first father sinned, and thy prophets have trespassed against me.

Are not these words evident enough? God the Father perceiving right well, that there should arise false anointed, and false preachers, who without shame would arrogantly arrogate, and proudly challenge to themselves that power of forgiving sin, which alone pertaineth to him, plainly here affirms, that he alone putteth away our sins. And because he would have us the more seriously and earnestly to believe it, he repeats this word, "I," twice, saying, I am he, yea, I am he indeed, which putteth away thy sins, yea, and that for mine own sake. And lest any man should think one may forgive another's sins, (I speak of those sins which are between God and our conscience, and not of brotherly reconciliation,) he affirms that our first father Adam, and all prophets and preachers have sinned, so that of them no remission of sins is to be looked for. Can flesh purify the soul? That which is born of flesh is flesh, saith Christ. All have sinned, saith Saint Paul, and want the glory of God. Again, God hath wrapped all nations, saith he, in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all. If all be sinners, flesh, and the children of wrath; if all be hypocrites, unprofitable servants, earth, dust, and ashes; if all be the enemies of God and unfaithful, how dare we to be so bold, as to take upon us to forgive another their sins? Is a traitor a fit man to purchase a pardon of a

prince? Can one traitor forgive another his treason? Can one sinner forgive another his sin? Of the unclean, what can be made clean? as Job saith, who can make him clean, that is conceived of unclean seed: Is it not thou alone O Lord? It is the Lord alone indeed; as David saith, Thou O Lord, shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean, yea, I shall be made whiter than snow. And as our Saviour Christ said unto Peter, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. If God wash us not from our filthiness, we have no part in the heritage of Christ.

Again, the aforesaid prophet saith, The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, and he it is that shall save us. How oft is "the Lord" here repeated, to show that it is he alone, who worketh all good things in us, who forgiveth our sins, and saveth us; yea, and none but he alone. Again, the Lord himself saith by the same prophet, I am the Lord, and there is no Saviour besides me. Here God himself confesses, that he alone is the Lord, and that there is none other Saviour besides him; that is to say, none that forgiveth sin, and giveth eternal life, but he alone.

By another prophet, he also saith, Thy destruction, O Israel, cometh of thyself, only of me cometh thy help and salvation. David, that holy king and godly prophet, knowing his deliverance from sin to be of God alone, stirred up his inward man to magnify the Lord, saying, Magnify the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name. O my soul, bless the Lord, and forget not all his benefits. For it is he that pardoneth all thine iniquities, and that healeth all thy diseases; yea, he it is that delivereth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee in mercy and loving-kindness. Again, Let Israel trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is infinite mercy and plenteous redemption. And he it is that redeemeth Israel from all their sins. Whosoever therefore taketh on him to forgive sin, maketh himself a Saviour, and saith with the apostate angel, I will climb up above the high clouds, and I will be like unto the Most High. But let him know that pride will have a fall, and that the Lord is a jealous God, and will give his glory to none other. Who delivered Adam from everlasting damnation, when he with his wife had transgressed the commandment of the high Lord? Who absolved Noah from his drunkenness? Who

delivered Lot from his uncleanness? Who saved Moses and forgave him his manslaughter? Who absolved David from his adultery? Who had compassion on the Ninevites when they repented, believed, and converted? To be short, Who forgave and absolved all the patriarchs, kings, prophets, priests, &c. with all others of the Old Testament, when they acknowledged their sins, and returned unto the Lord their God, with faithful repentance, but only God alone? To whom did they flee for remission of sins but to God alone? In whom did they put their affiance and trust but in God alone? as the psalmist testifies, saying, Our fathers trusted in thee, O Lord, yea, they trusted in thee, and thou deliveredst them. They cried unto thee, and they were made safe; in thee, O Lord, they trusted, and were not confounded. Are not these the words of blessed David? I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin. Here is no mention made of Aaron, or of any of that priesthood, nor yet of pope, patriarch, cardinal, archbishop, bishop, priest, or any other man to forgive us our sins, but of God alone. So it follows that the Lord alone remitteth the ungodliness of our sin, and that he alone absolveth a pœna et culpa.* This was godly doctrine in the Old Testament, neither was he counted by godly men as an heretic that taught this kind of learning at that time. God was then the Lord alone, all-sufficient for all his people that truly repented and converted to his unmeasurable mercy; neither had he need at that time of any other to be conjoined with him, as he himself said unto Abraham, Fear not, Abraham, I am thy defender, and thine altogether sufficient rewarder. And is the Lord's hand now so abbreviated and shortened, that he can save no more? or is his ear so stopped that he cannot hear? What a sudden change is this! But I steadfastly believe that he is the same Lord now that he was in the old time, and of no less power to remit sin at this present, than he was many thousand years before these our days, inasmuch as he abideth for ever, one, and is not changeable; as he saith by the prophet Malachi, I am the Lord, and am not changed.

Hitherto I have been bold in few words to prove that in the time of the old law, God alone forgave the sins of his people, without the help, either of bishop, prophet,

* From punishment and blame.

priest, levite, or any other, that the whole glory of their salvation might be ascribed to him alone. Now let us also labour to declare, that God alone doth the very same thing in the New Testament, that he alone may still remain the God of health, against the pestilent doctrine of the wicked papists, who so labour to maintain their usurped power and feigned authority in forgiving sin, to the great obscuring of God's glory; and that to him alone all honour and praise may be given.

We read in the holy gospel, that when a certain man, being diseased of the palsy, was brought unto Christ to be made whole, Christ said unto him, Son, be of a good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee. The scribes hearing these words of forgiving sin, and thinking with themselves that Christ was not God, but man only, and that it was the office of God alone to remit and forgive sin, spake on this manner within themselves, He blasphemeth, this fellow blasphemeth; or, as Mark and Luke write, Who is he that speaketh blasphemies? Who is able to forgive sin but God alone? Here the scribes, tendering more the glory of God than our papists or pharisees do at this time, could not abide that Christ, whom they judged only man, should challenge to himself power to forgive sin, seeing that alone pertaineth to God. And upon this place of Scripture many write that the scribes erred not in this confession, that God alone forgiveth sin, but in this they say they were deceived, because they believed not that Christ was both God and man. If Christ had been nothing but man, he had blasphemed indeed, that is to say, he had taken that thing upon him, which is the office of God alone; but forasmuch as he was not only man, but also God, he blasphemed not, he challenged nothing but what was his right. So did the scribes, and not Christ, blaspheme. Let all men, therefore, learn of this history that God alone forgiveth sin.

Does not Christ also, in the aforesaid chapter of Matthew, call himself a physician, and show that he came to call sinners to repentance, and to make them whole? Why calleth he himself a physician, but because it is his office to cure and heal? Jeremiah prayed unto this physician, saying, Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save thou me, and I shall be safe, for thou art he whom I will magnify. For he knew full well, that all other physicians were unprofitable without his help, and no more meet to

cure sick consciences of themselves, than the old lion was to heal the horse, of whom Esop wrote in his fables, which notwithstanding took on him to practise physic, when of that same science he was altogether ignorant.

Moreover Christ calleth all them that labour and are heavy laden to him, and promiseth that he will refresh, ease, and comfort them. He sendeth them not away to others, but calleth them all without exception to Himself, whereby he showeth that no creature, either in heaven or in earth, can truly and sufficiently heal our infirm and sick consciences, but He alone, who saith, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live, and every one that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. For who can forgive me my sin, but he alone, who is without all sin? Who can deliver me from death and hell, but he alone, who hath overcome them both? Who can make me good, but he alone, who only is good? Who can make me wise, righteous, and holy, but he alone who is appointed of God the Father, to be our wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification? Finally, who can engraft in me life and virtue, but he alone, in whom is all hope of life and virtue? Therefore full well doth Christ call so many as labour and are laden with the burden of sin to come to him, and promises that he will refresh them, that is to say, absolve and deliver them from their sins. Hereto belongs the saying of blessed John Baptist, Behold that Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Here the blessed Baptist confesses, that it is Christ alone who absolveth and taketh away the sin of the world.

Does not also the holy evangelist saint John, in the aforesaid chapter, call Christ that true light, which lighteneth every man that cometh into this world? What other thing is it to lighten, than to put away the clouds of sins, and to send into our hearts the radiant and glistering beams of the eternal sun, which is the knowledge of God's most holy will? And this, saith saint John, is the office of Christ alone. Why does Christ call so many as thirst unto him, and promise that floods of living waters shall flow out of them; yea, and that he will give them the water of life freely, but only to show that whosoever is thirsty, and heartily desires remission of sins, must with all haste come to him, and say with the psalmist, Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul

after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God, &c. Furthermore Christ commandeth that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name. Whence we may learn that forgiveness of sin cometh only by the name of Christ.

And in the Acts of the apostles, we find that when any famous or notable act or miracle was done, the people, as many do at this day, ascribed it to the virtue and power of the apostles; willing to do sacrifice unto them for it. But the apostles rejected and cast away all such unmerited honour and undeserved praise, contending and mainly labouring to persuade the people, that whatsoever was done came not to pass by their power, but by the virtue of Jesus Christ, whom God raised up from death. And when they made mention of remission of sins, they did never remember and rehearse their own power to forgive sin, but only preached, that so many as believed and were baptized into the remission of sins, should be absolved and freely forgiven by the name of Jesus Christ. And in the Acts of the apostles blessed Peter plainly confesses, that there is no health, nor life, nor remission of sins, but in Christ alone, and that there is none other name given unto men, under heaven, wherein they must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ alone. Neither did the apostles absolve any otherwise, than by the preaching of God's word, which when it was heard and believed, then were the diligent hearers and faithful believers of the same truly absolved; as Christ saith, Now are ye clean for the word's sake that I have spoken unto you; that is, Now are ye delivered from your sins, because ye have believed my preaching. The faith of the heart justifieth, saith saint Paul. Where it may be learned, that if faith be not given to the word, there is no absolution or deliverance from sin. For whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and where faith is not, there abideth the wrath of God; as holy John Baptist saith, He that believeth the Son, hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him.

Therefore, before Christ absolved any man of his sins, he beheld and saw whether he had faith or not. If Christ found true faith in his heart, then he always said, Thy faith hath saved thee. Seeing then that none can search the heart, whether it be faithful or unfaithful, but God alone, seeing also that the absolution beareth no strength,

but where faith is, it follows that none can absolve me of my sins, but that Lord alone, who seareheth the reins and the heart. The priest is only God's minister, appointed of God if he be truly sent, to preach that absolution and free deliverance from my sin, through the name of Jesus Christ; which preaching if I believe, I am so sure to be delivered from all my sins, as though Christ himself had said unto me, I freely absolve thee, or thy sins are forgiven thee for thy faith's sake in my name. Are not these the words of Christ, who is the self truth* and cannot lie, spoken to all faithful ministers, He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me? But let us rehearse more Scriptures, although to any Christian heart, these, which hitherto I have recited, may seem abundantly to suffice.

Blessed Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, proves manifestly, that God alone justifieth us. If our justification cometh from God alone, then follows it well, that the remission of our sins cometh from God alone also. For remission of sins goeth before justification. By Christ's death we are delivered from our sins; but by his resurrection we are justified and made righteous. So does it evidently appear that it is God alone, who both remitteth the sin, and also justifieth the sinner, for Christ's sake, who is our righteousness. Again the aforesaid apostle saith, that God hath not only given us his Son, but also all things with him. Therefore, he hath given us absolution of sins. So we see that God alone absolves and forgives us our sins for Christ's sake. St. Paul to the Galatians affirms that Christ gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, that is to say, from all evil in this present world. Therefore, God alone it is, who delivers us from our sins in this vale of misery. Ye are washed from your sins, saith he, yea, ye are sanctified and made righteous by the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Therefore, our absolution, our deliverance from sin, our sanctification, our justification, and all that is good, cometh from God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Again he saith, God the Father hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings—therefore, with the blessings of absolution and free deliveranee from all our sins. God hath delivered us from the power of darkness,

* The truth itself.

and carried us into the kingdom of his well-beloved Son, by whom we have redemption, even by his blood, remission of sins. Therefore by Christ's blood are we absolved and delivered from our sins.

Every good gift and every perfect gift, saith James, cometh from above, and descendeth from the Father of light. Therefore, absolution, which is a good and perfect gift, cometh down from the Father of light. Blessed John in his epistle, saith, If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to make us clean from all iniquity. Here saint John affirms, that God forgiveth our sins, and maketh us clean from all unrighteousness. He saith also, that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, maketh us clean from all sin. And in the chapter following, he saith, If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ that righteous one. And he it is that obtaineth mercy for our sins, not for our sins only, but for all the world also. Again he saith, I write unto you, ye little children, that your sins are forgiven you for Christ's name sake. Here see we again that by Christ remission of sins cometh to us from God the Father. Moreover blessed John, in his Revelation, writes in this manner, Christ hath loved us, and washed us from our sins by his blood. Here see we that all our sins are washed away by Christ's blood alone. What should I write more? If I go forth to gather together all the places of Holy Scripture, that prove the absolution of our sins, to come from God alone, I should not only trouble the most godly reader, but also write a volume longer than the Iliads of the Greek poet Homer, when, to any Christian judgment, I may justly seem already to have proved my article to be true and sufficiently Christian, unto the great shame of all these papists, who cease not with their stentorian voices to speak evil of the true preachers of God's word, and to obscure or deface the glory of God. Take away the power of only remitting sins from God, and what remains there wherefore we should confess ourselves bound to him! I speak of matters concerning the salvation of our souls. If all that are of the shaven nation* have power to absolve men of their sins at their pleasure, and to remit or retain whose iniquities it pleases them, then is God well promoted, even "out of the hall into the kitchen," as people use to say.

* Romish priests.

So should it also follow that so many as pleased the priests should have their sins forgiven them, and so be saved, otherwise not. Oh, intolerable blasphemy! But as God alone remitted the sins of the fathers of the old testament, so in like manner does he now in the new testament. Who absolved Mary Magdalen from her sins, but Christ? Who forgave the thief his robbery and murder, but Christ? Who had compassion on Peter, when he had denied his master Christ, but Christ? Who made of Matthew the publican and tax-gatherer, a faithful apostle and preacher, but Christ? Who is that good Shepherd that fetcheth home the stray sheep, lovingly upon his shoulders into the sheepfold? is it not Christ, who saith of himself, I am that good Shepherd? A good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Who received home joyfully the lost son, was it not Christ? Who healed the wounded man? Did the priest or the levite? Or rather Christ the Samaritan? Who made of Saul the persecutor, Paul the apostle, was it not Christ? Who absolved all these, with many others mentioned in the Scripture, from their sins, but Christ alone, the Son of the living God? Does not all power belong to Christ, both in heaven and earth? to him therefore alone does the power of remitting sin pertain.

Seeing then that this is true, and nothing more true, why may we not be bold to say, notwithstanding the papists, that God alone absolves the truly penitent, and only remits the sins of so many as with an unfeigned faith convert, and flee unto his mercy? If this be heresy, which alone we confess and teach, I could allege divers sentences out of the holy doctors of Christ's church, which maintain this doctrine. But seeing I fight not for the advancement of man, but for the glory of God, I will not fill this my work with man's doctrine, but with the infallible verity of God's word. For I know that every man is a liar, but God is true, and his word abideth for evermore.

Now will I prepare myself to the second part of this treatise, and afterwards make answer to the objections of the adversaries, that God may still remain a glorious God, in the presence of all men, and all other be accounted dust and ashes in comparison of him. The second part of this treatise is this; As concerning the priest, he forgiveth not the sin, but only is the minister of God, appointed to utter and declare that free remission of sins purchased for us of

God the Father, by the most precious blood of Jesus Christ. This makes the papists cry out, "To the fire! to the fire! burn them! for this doctrine plucks them down one stave* lower than they were before. They may now become no more checkmate with God. For before they were not only not contented to be his ministers, but also they would be "Hail fellow, well met," with him. Now shall they be fain, either to be the messengers and servants of God, or else plain antichrists and papists. But let us see what the Scripture saith.

That the priest forgiveth not sin but God alone, is sufficiently proved before. Now must we learn from the Holy Scriptures, whether the priest be only a minister appointed of God to utter and declare the absolution and free deliverance from sin or not. That this is his office is manifest by divers places of the New Testament. When Christ sent forth his disciples, he said unto them in this manner: Go unto the universal world, and preach the gospel to every creature; whoso shall believe and be baptized, he shall be saved; but whoso shall not believe, shall be condemned. Here is it evident enough, what authority priests have, and what their office is, verily, to preach the gospel and to baptize. Mark that they must preach the gospel, as St. Paul saith, Christ sent me not only to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Again, Wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel. And in the description of a spiritual minister he shows that such a one ought to be chosen as is not only learned, but also apt to teach, able to exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to convince or overcome them that speak against the truth of Christ's gospel. And Saint Peter saith, Ye elders, feed the flock of Christ, so much as in you is. What else is it to preach the gospel, than to declare unto the people, that their sins be forgiven them freely of God, if they repent and believe in Christ, as it is written; He that believeth the Son, hath everlasting life. If sins be forgiven of God, and the ministers commanded to declare the same to the people, then it follows that they forgive not the sin, but only are ministers appointed of God to publish that benefit of our salvation. If a prince pardons a subject the treason committed against his person, and sends his letters of favour to the traitor by one of his faithful servants, commanding him to declare his mercy, full of pity, to the

* Step of a ladder.

guilty; who forgiveth the fault? the messenger or the king? I am sure it will be answered, The king. And not unjustly, for the prince alone pardons, the messenger only declares his prince's pleasure to the traitor. Even so, all we have offended, and worthily deserved eternal death. Now the good pleasure of our most mighty Prince, is to forgive us even of his own free mercy, without our deserts or merits, for Christ's sake. And that his unspeakable goodness towards mankind may be known, he has appointed his ministers to publish it abroad. The sum of their commission is this—that whosoever will repent his former life, and believe to have remission of their sins through the mercy of God, in Jesus Christ our Lord, they shall be forgiven. The ministers of God publish these joyful news, and exhort to repentance and faith: the people repent and believe; their sins are forgiven. Who forgiveth the sins of the faithful repentant? The granter of the commission or the declarer thereof? God or man? I doubt not but that you will answer, God. If God alone, whom we offend, forgive the sin, and not the declarers of the forgiveness, I have gotten that I have desired for the probation of the second part of this little treatise. But let us hear what Christ saith, As my Father sent me, so send I you. Now I pray you, how was Christ sent, and for what purpose? Let us hear what he himself saith, and then shall I be blameless. By the prophet Isaiah, he speaks on this manner, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and sight to the blind, freely to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Again he saith, I must preach the glad and joyful tidings of the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent. Again he saith, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore am I come. All these sentences declare manifestly, that Christ was sent to preach the kingdom of God; that is to say, free deliverence from sin to as many as repent and believe. If they will not be above Christ, they must be contented to preach the will of the celestial Father, as he was, and not to take upon them that whereof they are only ministers. Do not saint Paul, James, Peter, and Jude, call themselves the servants of Jesus Christ in all their epistles? declaring

thereby that they are not the self-master,* by whom remission and absolution of sins cometh, but only the ministers of Him, who infuses and pours into all men, grace, favour, remission of sins, and everlasting life? There is but one Master, that is to say, Christ; the others are servants, as saint Paul witnesses, We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and we your servants for Jesus' sake. Again, Let a man thus esteem us, even as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the secrets of God. All these texts declare manifestly, that priests, if they are true ministers, and not rather idlers, are nothing but ministers and stewards, appointed of God to declare unto the Christian congregation, that free remission of sins comes unto us from God alone, through the glorious name of Jesus Christ. So far is it off, that the priests contrary to their commission can forgive sins, whose office consists in declaring, and not in giving remission of sins.

Therefore let them be contented no more from henceforth arrogantly to arrogate that unto them which pertains to God alone; but humbly confess, that God only forgives the sin, and that they are but commissioners appointed of God to publish and set forth the same. I mean the remission of sins given to the faithful penitent, of God alone. Neither let them frown at this doctrine, which sets them in their right place, but rather, as becomes good and faithful servants, let them give the glory of our salvation to God alone, and be glad that they are called unto such a worthy and honourable office as to declare the mysteries of God to the people. Whose preachings or sermons, whosoever believeth, may be so certainly assured of the remission of their sins, as though God himself had said unto them, Your sins are forgiven you. For this saying of Christ is an infallible truth, He that heareth you heareth me.

Now let us behold the objections of papists, and briefly confute them, that all the glory may be the Lord's. First they allege this saying of Christ, "Loosen him and let him go away." Again, "Loosen them and bring them unto me." Here is a simple, poor shift to prove their absolution, when they are compelled to flee unto the untying of a vile sheet, and the loosening of a rude ass. Look, wheresoever the papists find any word that comes of this verb "solvo,"

* The master himself.

which maketh for absolution, straightways they bring it in. I marvel how this escaped them, "Solve quod debes." (Pay what thou owest.) I think if "salve regina"* had been turned into "solve regina," as some of them, that are not very fine mouthed, pronounce it, they would not have been ashamed to have alleged it for absolution! Which some of the papists do, who wheresoever they find "ignis,"† take it for purgatory straightways. Oh noble doctors of tyrology,‡ rather than of theology.

As concerning the first text which is, that Christ commanded Lazarus should be let loose, and suffered freely to go his way; if they will gather their absolution from that, it may then be proved that all other men and women have that same power as well as they. For there were at that time present, not only the disciples of Christ, but also divers Jews, with certain women, who I am sure were not all priests. Have they not made a good market? they have brought a shilling to nine pence, or rather to nothing! While they labour to make themselves gods, and to excel all others in dignity, they go so wisely to work that they have made themselves equal to the most inferior. Oh crafty daubers! Which of them all is able to prove that Christ spake these words, "Loosen him and let him go," rather to his disciples, than to all the others indifferently? I think rather that he spake them to the women, as most commonly occupied about such things. But to whom he spake the text makes no mention, therefore they can prove nothing.

As touching the loosening of the ass, who sees not their foolishness? The occasion why Christ sent the disciples for the ass, was not to give them power to loosen men from their sins at their pleasure, but to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah, who so long before prophesied that Christ should come, riding meekly upon an ass, contrary to the expectation of the ambitious and vain-glorious Jews. What is this to the purpose? Whereas Christ by this example teaches humility, the papists gather pride! Christ submits himself even with the lowest, and they exalt themselves with the highest, yea, above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, and sit in the temple of God, and show themselves as God. Tell me, good reader, are not these sweet allegory makers? I would they would once cease to moralize, for they have lied too long.

* Hail, O queen; the commencement of an address to the virgin.
† Fire. ‡ Teachers of the youngest scholars.

Some of them also allege this saying of Christ, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on the earth, shall be also bound in heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt loosen on earth, shall be loosened in heaven." Here they esteem themselves more than gods. By this text they think they may do whatsoever pleases them, save or condemn, bind or loose, hold up or cast down, build or subvert, bring to heaven, or cast down to hell. But if the good men would take the pains to look what goes before, their comb should soon be plucked down, they would not make so much of their painted sheath. Christ saith, a little before, I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. He saith not, "I give thee." Christ, in this place, only promised the keys to the congregation, and performed his promise after his resurrection, as we may see in the gospel of John. Hereof may the papists right well perceive, that this text, whereof they have so greatly gloried, and out of which they have sucked such great advantage, makes little unto the advancement of their feigned power.

Their last and most strong bulwark, where the keys were given to the true ministers, is this text, "Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Here they triumph and persuade themselves that they have gotten the victory, though they never fight a stroke. But if they will be favourable to God, and work no injury to the other Scriptures before rehearsed, they shall have no cause to lift up their bristles. Christ speaks here after the manner of our speech, which diligently must be noted, unless we will deprive God of his glory. When we see a man restored to his health, who long before has been vexed with some grievous disease, and is made whole through the diligence of some physician, we use to say, Doctor Turner made this man whole, or doctor Byll, or some other, who is expert in that kind of science; and yet is it not the doctor that made him whole, but rather the emplastures and medicines that he ministered unto him, yea, rather God, if we will speak truly, who gave such virtue to his creatures to work health unto the sick. So does the Scripture speak. Sometimes it attributes our health to the ministers of the word, as in this aforesaid place; sometimes and most commonly to God himself, as we heretofore have abundantly heard; and sometimes, to the word of God, as it is written, Now are ye clean for the word's sake which I have spoken

unto you: Also, neither herb nor emplasture hath healed them, but thy word, O Lord, that healeth all things. Hereto pertains the saying of the psalmist, He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions; and yet God alone makes us whole, and forgives us our sins, as he himself witnesses by the prophet, saying, Thy destruction, O Israel, cometh of thyself, only of me cometh thy help and salvation. What can be more plainly spoken? Who is able once to hiss against these things? Who will once open his mouth to bark against this doctrine? No man, I suppose, except he be altogether drowned in papism.

This therefore is the true meaning of the aforesaid text. Whensoever the ministers of the Lord's word declare unto me the sweet promises of God the Father, made to me, in Christ's blood, and I believe them, then are my sins forgiven me, at the very instant; but if I do not believe them, then are my sins retained, that is to say, not forgiven. And forasmuch as I either repent and believe, or else continue still in my old damnable state, at the preaching of the Lord's ministers, therefore the Scripture attributes my deliverances from sin, or otherwise, to them, when, notwithstanding, God alone remitteth my sin, if I repent and believe. If I do not, the uncircumcision of my heart, that is my incredulity and unfaithfulness, is the occasion that my sins are retained and not forgiven. For this saying always must needs abide true, Thy destruction, O Israel, cometh of thyself, only of me cometh thy help and salvation. So that the priests, I mean the ministers of God's word, are counted to forgive sin, when they preach to the truly repentant, remission of sins through Christ, and to retain sin, when they declare to the unfaithful, damnation, and that the wrath of God abideth upon them, so long as they remain still in their incredulity and unfaithfulness. As it is written, He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him. Thus see we, that those texts of Holy Scripture which the papists allege for the maintenance of their feigned and usurped power in remitting sin, make nothing for their purpose, if they be truly alleged and understood, according to the vein of the Holy Scriptures. The Scriptures of God may not be rent and torn neither hacked nor wrested to serve the private affections*

* Likings.

of men, but every text must be so weighed, pondered, alleged, and understood, that it may agree with the other texts of the Holy Bible, that all the glory of our salvation may be ascribed to God alone, who is both the beginner and finisher of all our health.* To him therefore, be all honour and praise for ever. Amen.

Now will I make haste to the last part of this treatise, which requires that I should express my mind concerning the keys, which Christ, before his passion, promised to his church, and after his resurrection performed his promise; and show, by the sacred Scriptures, that the gift of the keys is no vain and idle gift, but a necessary, joyful, and comfortable treasure. For the papists will here object, If remission of sins cometh from God alone, then were the keys given to the congregation in vain.

But to the intent that I may stop the mouths of adversaries, and that they may have no occasion to bark against the glory of God after this, mark well, good reader, what shall be spoken. Truth it is that God alone teaches men his verity by the Holy Ghost, as it is written, All shall be taught of God. Again, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. The psalmist also saith: I will hear what the Lord speaketh in me; yet will he that they should be studious of the Holy Scriptures both day and night, as it is commanded of Christ; Search the Scriptures, and also diligently hear the preaching of his word, as it is written; He that is of God, heareth the words of God. My sheep hear my voice. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice. So in like manner, although God alone remitteth all sin, yet will he that the remission of sins should be preached to the people, that by this means they may repent, believe, and be made whole; as Christ testifies, saying, It behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again from death the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. For the ministers of the gospel are the organs and instruments of Christ, by whom God worketh, through his Holy Spirit, health and salvation, in so many as are predestinate unto eternal life. They are God's labourers and ministers, by whom we believe, even as the Lord giveth every man grace. They

* Salvation.

are the orators, messengers, interpreters, angels, apostles, and ambassadors of the Lord; as the apostle saith, All things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the office to preach the atonement. For God was in Christ, and reconciled the world unto himself, and imputed not their sins unto them, and among us hath he set up the word of atonement. Now then are we messengers in the room of Christ, even as though God exhorted by us. We beseech you now therefore in Christ's stead, that ye be at one with God. Again, to the Galatians he writes in this manner, Ye did not despise nor abhor me, but received me as an angel of God, yea, even as Christ Jesus. Hereto pertains his saying to the Thessalonians, He that casteth away us, casteth not away men, but God, who hath given his Holy Spirit unto us. Moses also, in times past, said to the people that murmured against him, The Lord hath heard your grudging and murmuring, wherewith ye murmur against him. For what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord. So likewise read we in the gospel, that the Lord spake of his ministers, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I shall send, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him also that sent me. Again he saith; He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him also that sent me. Here see we that the ministers of God's word are not to be despised, for they are necessary instruments unto the health of men, and they are worthy of double honour, as the apostle saith.

Therefore may it be concluded, that the absolution of the priest is not to be despised, seeing it is none other thing, if it be a true and Christian absolution, than the preaching of free remission of our sins in Christ's name. And although he that planteth be nothing, and he that watereth be nothing, but only God, which giveth the increase; again, albeit the Lord blesseth us with all spiritual benediction, yet inasmuch as the inestimable kindness and manifold benefits of God toward us cannot be known, nor believed without preaching, (for "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,") therefore God has appointed his ministers to open and declare unto men those excellent mysteries, those comfortable and joyful

promises of God's merey and goodwill toward mankind; that they may pereeive, learn, and understand, what is given them of the Lord, what they ought to believe, how they should obtain the gifts of God, and lead a life worthy the kindness of so bounteous a father—God also hath appointed the ministers to beget men in Christ Jesus by the gospel, to open the eyes of the blind, to turn them from darkness to light, to eonvert the hearts of fathers unto their ehildren, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous. He hath eommanded them to preaeh repentanee and remission of sins in his name unto all nations. Go your way, saith he, into the universal world, and preaeh the gospel to every ereature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be eondemned.

Moreover, he hath given to his faithful ministers the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that whatsoever they loosen in earth, may be also loosened in heaven; and whatsoever they bind in earth, may also be bound in heaven; that is to say, he hath eommitted to them the offiee of preaehing the gospel, that they should go forth into the world, and preaeh unto all men, the graee and favour that is given of God the Father for Christ's sake. Yea, and that they should proelaim, publish, and set abroad unto all men, that so many as repent and believe, are loosened from the eaptivity of Satan, purged from sin, delivered from death, and made inheritors of eternal life. Again, that so many as believe not, remain still the eaptives and bond-slaves of Satan, and eontinue bound in their sins, and in the state of damnation, and that therefore they shall die the death, and for evermore be damned, exeept they repent, turn, and believe.

And thus their preaehing is so eertain and sure before God, that whatsoever they pronounee, being eonformable to the word of God, shall as eertainly eome to pass, as though God himself had spoken it. As, for an example, whensoever the ministers and preachers of God's word in this world shall deelare to the faithful, repentance, remission of sins, and tell them that they are loosened from the eaptivity of Satan, it is even as eertain and sure, as though God himself had said these words unto them, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." In like manner when they shall say to the unfaithful, that they remain still bound in their sin,

and that the wrath of God abideth upon them, and therefore they shall be damned, God approves their saying, and it shall undoubtedly come to pass, according to their preaching. So that whatsoever the minister of God's word saith according to the word of God, ought to be received with great reverence, and taken as an oracle sent down from heaven, and undoubtedly believed as a manifest and infallible truth of God. And this preaching of remitting or retaining sins, are the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which Christ promised his apostles before his death, as we may see in Matthew, and after his resurrection he performed his promise, as we read in the gospel of saint John.

And, by a metaphor, Christ calls the preaching of his word a key. For as a key has two properties, one to shut, another to open, so has the word of God. It opens to the faithful the treasure of the gifts of God, grace, mercy, favour, remission of sins, quietness of conscience, and everlasting life; but to the unfaithful it shuts all its treasures, and suffers them to receive none of them all, so long as they persist and remain in their incredulity and unfaithfulness. These keys are given to so many as being truly called to the office of ministration, preach the word of God. They loosen, that is to say, they preach to the faithful remission of sins by Christ. They also bind, that is, they declare to the unfaithful damnation. But he that preaches not the word of God, can neither bind, nor loose, though he challenge ever so great dignity, authority, and power. For Christ calls it the key of knowledge. And the prophet saith, The lips of the priest keep knowledge, and at his mouth shall they require the law; for he is the angel or messenger of the Lord of hosts. Therefore where there is no knowledge, there is no key; and where there is no key, there is neither opening nor shutting, that is, neither binding nor loosening.

Here let all men judge what is to be thought of the papists' absolution, whereof they boast so much, which also they sell so dearly.* If no remission of sins comes from them, but by preaching God's word, it follows, that their absolution avails but little, seeing they never preach either the law of God, or his sweet promises, but only mumble a few words in the Latin tongue, yea, and those so as not to

* Romish indulgences, or absolution bestowed for sums of money.

be understood; so likewise many times they do this, contrary to the divine Scriptures, and the glory of God. Miserable, doubtless, is that congregation which hath a blind guide for their curate, which hath neither the gift nor the knowledge of preaching. "For if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." Again, greatly fortunate is that parish, and highly blessed of God, to whom a learned shepherd hath been allotted, who can feed them with knowledge and doctrine. Whatsoever they shall hear from such a learned and godly minister, let them believe it as a voice coming down from heaven. And so often as, by such a shepherd, remission of sins in the blood of Christ is preached unto the congregation, let them esteem that preaching none otherwise, than if the Lord himself had preached it. Let them steadfastly believe the word of God, and undoubtedly, by their faith, through the grace of God, they shall obtain remission of all their sins. Contrariwise, if they believe not, their sins are retained, and by no means forgiven. These things have I spoken concerning the absolution, or the keys, which consist only in preaching God's word, that the papists may have no occasion justly to bark against me, as they have done hitherto, both for my sermons and books. God forgive them, and send them a better mind!

Now, forasmuch as the true and Christian absolution is nothing else than the preaching of free deliverance from sin, by the death of Jesus Christ, it ought not to be contemned and despised, but rather to be received with great humility and reverence, even as a divine oracle sent down from the Father of lights. For no man can express how greatly it comforts infirm and weak consciences, which are troubled with the fear of God's judgments. When the prophet came unto king David, and rebuked him for slaying Uriah the Hittite, and for taking his wife Bathsheba unto his wife, and told him how greatly God was angry with him, and what plagues should fall upon his house, yea, upon himself, for his wickedness; it is not to be doubted but that David was stricken with a wonderful great heaviness, and his heart pierced with an inward sorrow, insomuch that he was right ashamed of himself, of his fault, of his wickedness, and was compelled, even of conscience, to burst out into the knowledge of his sin, and to say, "I have sinned against the Lord." As David was now full

of sorrow, grief, trouble, disquietness in his heart, and had joy of nothing, unto such shame and confusion was he brought in his conscience, so likewise, it is not to be doubted but that he was wonderfully revived, marvellously restored unto the peace and quietness of his conscience, yea, and plenteously replenished with joy in his mind, when the prophet said these words unto him, "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." Mary Magdalen was a notorious sinner, and when she heard her unclean conversation rebuked by the word of God, she heartily repented, and was replenished* with an inward sorrow, lamenting greatly that she had offended so bounteous a Lord, and merciful God, insomuch that a large fountain of tears flowed out of her tender eyes. All this time, undoubtedly, her sorrow was greater than can be here expressed. But when she heard this comfortable absolution of our Saviour Christ, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," again, "Thy faith hath made thee safe, go thy way in peace," that is to say, with a quiet and joyful conscience—who is able to express with how great joy and singular solace she was affected? So sure and comfortable is it to weak and troubled consciences, to hear the sweet and comfortable words of our free deliverance from the grievous burden of sin by Christ's blood. The thief was full of great anguish and trouble in his conscience when he hung upon the cross, in the time of Christ's passion, and confessed that both he and his fellow thief suffered worthily, even according to their deserts; and in the midst of his troubled conscience he cried unto the Lord Christ in this manner, saying, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." But when Christ had made him answer, and said, "Verily, I say unto thee, This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," Oh with what a quiet conscience suffered he his pains, and with how glad a heart yielded he up his spirit into the hands of the eternal Father! So comfortable a thing is it to a troubled conscience to hear any thing that may quiet the conscience.

Again, when blessed Peter preached unto the Jews, and told them that they had crucified Christ the Lord, the Scripture saith, that they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and unto the other apostles, "Ye men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them,

* Filled.

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." As they were greatly dismayed when the holy apostle opened unto them their malicious deed, in slaying Christ the Lord, so were they very much comforted when they heard from saint Peter, that there was hope that their sins would be forgiven, so that they repented them of their wickedness, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. With how entire and unspeakable sorrow is it to be thought that the notorious adulterer among the Corinthians was overwhelmed, when at the commandment of saint Paul he was delivered unto Satan, excommunicated, put out of the Christian company, and reputed among them as a heathen and publican!

Contrariwise, with what exceeding joy was he replenished, when, after his repentance and sorrow, he heard the sweet promises of God's mercy declared unto him, that are directed toward all sinners that repent in faith, and afterward was received into the company of faithful Christians!

I pass over divers other histories, both of the Old and New Testament, which so abundantly declare what great comfort the faithful penitent sinners have alway had in hearing the comfortable promises of God's mercy. Now the absolution being, as I said before, nothing else but the preaching of free deliverance from sin by the death of Jesus Christ, for God alone forgives sin, and absolves the faithful penitent, it ought not to be contemned and despised; but whensoever the minister of the Lord's word, be it privately or openly, shall rehearse unto men the sweet and comfortable words of God's mercy, toward all them that repent in faith, they ought to give earnest faith unto them, being undoubtedly persuaded that their sins at that time are assuredly forgiven them, as though God himself had spoken these words, according to this saying of Christ, He that heareth you, heareth me. But it were expedient that all true ministers should pray that their form or manner of absolution be pure and agreeable to the vein of the Holy Scriptures, without the intermixture of any man's authority in remitting sin, either of Peter, Paul, Francis, Dominic, Benedict, or any other, or yet of themselves. Again, that it be declared to the penitent, that God alone forgiveth the sin, and that the priests are but the ministers of God, to whom he hath given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to show to the true penitent, loosening, that is to say, re-

mission of their sins—to the obstinate and hard-hearted sinners, binding, that is, that they remain still in the danger of damnation, and shall be damned, except they repent and believe.

It should also be provided, that when the faithful penitent is desirous to have his conscience confirmed, established, and comforted with the word of God, it should not be mumbled in the Latin tongue, as the papists have hitherto used in their absolutions, but in the mother tongue, that the simple and unlearned may understand it and be edified. Or else what faith shall he conceive in his heart? How shall he repent? How shall he know the goodness of God towards sinners? How shall he arm himself with faith against Satan, sin, and desperation? How shall he prepare himself to give God thanks for his kindness, and to live worthy of his profession? God grant that all things may be done unto his glory, and unto the profit of his holy congregation.

Here hast thou, most godly reader, my mind concerning the absolution and forgiveness of sins, which, if it be examined by the Scriptures of God, all man's doctrine set apart, I doubt not but it will stand so strong, that the gates of hell shall not once be able to prevail against it.

Farewell,
most gentle reader, and pray that the Lord's word may have free passage, that the name of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ may be glorified among all nations, and that, all dissension laid aside, we may agree in one faith and one truth.
Amen.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

THE

FORTRESS OF THE FAITHFUL

AGAINST THE CRUEL ASSAULTS OF POVERTY AND HUNGER; NEWLY MADE, FOR THE COMFORT OF POOR NEEDY CHRISTIANS,

BY THOMAS BECON.

A. D. 1550.

PROVERBS xviii.—A MIGHTY STRONG FORTRESS IS THE NAME OF THE LORD: UNTO THAT FLEETH THE RIGHTEOUS, AND IS IN SAFEGUARD.

DAVID. Psalm xxxvii.—I have been young and am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging their bread. The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth, and yet shall his children have God's plenty and enough.

SOLOMON (or Agur). Proverbs xxx.—Two things have I required of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt not deny me before I die. Remove from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches, only grant me a necessary living; lest if I be too full, I deny thee and say, Who is the Lord? and lest I, being constrained through poverty, fall unto stealing, and forswear the name of my God.

CHRIST. Matthew vi.—Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewith shall we be clothed? After all these things the heathen seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and all these shall be cast unto you.

EXTRACT

FROM THE

DEDICATION TO SIR JOHN ROBSART, Knt.

So oft as I behold the wretched and very miserable face of this needy and beggarly world, yea, so oft as I consider the lamentable and pitiful state of the poor people, now grown to such a number that they are almost innumerable, and so assailed with the cruel darts of poverty and hunger, that they in a manner despair of necessary food and convenient apparel for the sustenance of their poor wretched bodies; and by this means, for a redress of their too manifold miseries, part of them whose brains are not perfectly settled, whose judgments are not thoroughly stayed in the way of perfect reason, not patiently bearing the cross of poverty, contrary to Christian order and their bounden duty, unto the great sorrow of all good men, attempt ungodly and unlawful enterprises; as wicked counsels, unjust assemblies, abominable seditions, devilish insurrections, detestable commotions, unrighteous spoilings of other men's goods, uncharitable railings against their superiors, &c. utterly defacing, so much as in them is, the face of the common weal, not considering that this plague of famine and hunger is sent into the world for sin, according to the threatenings of God expressed in the Holy Scriptures—I cannot but lament and heartily wish better and more prosperous things to the needy and poor creatures of God universally.

So many as are of God, and led by any natural or humane affection, cannot, even in the midst of their wealth, but grieve for the misery of the miserable, the poverty of the poor, the famine of the famished, and to the uttermost of their power study to relieve the distress of the needy, both with their goods and their counsel. As a true Christian man joyeth with those that are glad, even so sorroweth he with those that are sad. Charity seeketh not her own, but both wisheth and doeth well unto all men, even to her enemies. Charity putteth on the property* of Christ who became poor to make others rich. Charity joyeth not at her own joy, if others sorrow. Charity delighteth

* Nature, disposition.

not in her own fulness, if others want. Charity abhorreth her own rest if others be disquieted. I am cumbered daily, said St. Paul, and do care for all congregations. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I am not grieved? Yea, Charity almost refuses to be saved, if others enjoy not the like benefit.

As touching the relief of the poor and needy, oppressed with the want of worldly things, what good and godly man hath not at all times sought it, as occasion and ability have served? Who, being godly-minded, seeing his Christian brother or sister in necessity, seeks not all possible means to help them? Can a Christian abound in worldly wealth, and suffer his neighbour to famish or die for cold? He hath not put on the tender compassion of Christ, who is not moved with pity towards his needy neighbour. Oh what goodly and notable examples do the Holy Scriptures minister unto us, of succouring the succourless.*

* Becon then refers to the histories of Abraham, Job, and other holy men as recorded in Scripture, enforeing upon all who have ability, the duty of caring for "the poor members of Christ." He wrote this tract in consequence of the distress and trouble among the lower classes in the early part of the reign of king Edward VI., which arose from various causes. A scarcity at that time prevailed throughout Europe, and in England the prices of the necessaries of life were unusually dear. Many ignorant and bigoted persons also desired the restoration of popish ceremonies and superstitions, and their discontents were increased by the Romish ecclesiastics, who circulated many false reports among them. Nor were there wanting many idle and dissolute characters who eagerly promoted these disturbances. Two considerable rebellions broke out in Devonshire and Norfolk in the year 1549, which were suppressed with difficulty. Among the most active leaders were several Romish priests, who suffered by course of law. The rebels in Devonshire demanded the restoration of popery; those of Norfolk complained most of the inclosures, which had been gradually increasing during the last fifty years, but were now become a general subject of complaint, especially amongst those who sought to promote the disturbances. (See Strype's Memorials, vol. ii. ch. xxi. A minute history of these insurrections is given by Hollinshed.)

This tract is reprinted in an abridged form, omitting some passages which would not now be useful or interesting to the reader. Some of the historical narratives from Scripture also are compressed —the Bible was then "a sealed book" to the greater part of the people, and it was needful to give the histories at length. But the tract contains much that is suitable for all times. Human nature is still the same, the warnings and promises of the word of God are applicable to every age—hence the following pages contain much that may edify and instruct now, as well as when first written.

THE

FORTRESS OF THE FAITHFUL.

Philemon, Christopher, Theophile, and Eusebius, talk together.

Philemon. Most dear brethren; whosoever with a single eye beholds the corrupt manners of this most corrupt world, shall easily perceive that Satan our old enemy sleeps not; but as St. Peter saith, "He walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." For if a tree may be known to be fruitful by green leaves, flourishing blossoms, and pleasant fruit; if a workman may be proved by his labours and pains not to be idle; if the sun may be perceived to shine, because of his fiery and glistering beams; surely Satan, by the works that he brings forth in the children of this world, may justly be judged not to be idle, not to sleep, not to be slack in his office, but to behave himself in all points like Satan himself.

Let our time be compared with any age that has been from the beginning, I speak even of the age which was most ungodly, and most wicked, and that shall seem to be the most godly, and most virtuous. For although the pride, the covetousness, the whoredom, the unmercifulness, the malice, the banqueting, the building, the buying and selling, &c. exercised in the days of Noah, or at any other time, without doubt were great and abominable, (Gen. vi. Matt. xxiii. Luke xvii.) and justly deserved the vengeance of God as it came to pass; yet compared with the outrageousness of vices used in this our time, yea, and that so universally and unmeasurably, they may be judged but trifles, seeing that the number of them compared with the infinite multitude that now live most wickedly, is almost nothing. The pride of these our days is Lucifer-like, the covetousness is insatiable, the licentiousness is monstrous, the unmercifulness is butcher-like, the malice is enduring, the banqueting is too much epicure-like, the building is infinite, the buying and selling is full of falsehood, craft, and dissimulation, and so forth of other vices, which are already grown unto such an exceeding height, that they

can stretch out their branches no further. So it is truly said by St. John, The world is altogether set on wickedness. (1 John v.) David saith, They are corrupt and become abominable in their doings; there is not one that doeth good, no not one. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand and seek after God. But they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. (Ps. xiv.) And although every Christian heart beholding this most ungodly state of the world, cannot but lament and bewail the abominations used in these our days; and right heartily be sorry that the tares have so overgrown the good wheat; that vice so abounds, that virtue can take no place; that sin hath so overflowed the whole world, that true godliness is not only neglected and contemned, but also hissed at and utterly abhorred;—yet for these traitorous conspiracies, and hell-like commotions, which we of late have seen; wherewith also the commonweal of England has been disturbed, defaced, and greatly impoverished, who, except an enemy to good order, sorrowfully sorroweth not? The inferior members envy the principal parts of the body! Oh unnatural disposition! The servant to rule the master; the inferior to rise against his sovereign; the subject to disobey his governor. Oh cumbrous confusion! The brain-sick, yea, rather the brainless, head, to attempt redress of matters in a commonweal, unsent, uncalled! Oh preposterous order!

Christopher. It cannot be denied, but that divers of the commons have gone far beyond their limits, and taken in hand that which hath not become them.

Theophile. Their rash and disobedient behaviour can by no means please God.

Ph. Please! Yea, it rather most highly displeases God, who is the author of peace and not of confusion; who willeth all things to be done seemly and in comely order; who commands the subject to obey his superior in all things, not only for fear of punishment, but also for conscience-sake. (Rom. xiii.; 1 Pet. ii.) How greatly God is, and ever hath been, offended with disobedience and rebellion, with order-breaking, and disturbance of a commonweal, Holy Scriptures sufficiently do show.

Was not Adam thrown out of Paradise for his disobedience toward his Lord God, the most high and most

excellent magistrate? and both he and all we his offspring had been damned for ever, if we had not been redeemed by the precious blood of the undefiled Lamb, Jesus Christ. Thus from the beginning see we how greatly God abhorred disobedience, though the fault in our eyes seems very little, and not to be thought of.

Eusebius. Truly therefore was it said by Samuel, Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as the sin of idolatry. (1 Sam. xv.)

Ph. But that I may declare to you how God in commonwealths hath ever punished disobedience, rebellion, conspiracies, insurrections, and commotions against lawful magistrates, I pray you give ear, and mark what shall be said. You know right well, that when God determined to deliver his people the Israelites out of Egypt, the land of bondage and slavery, (Exodus xiii.) Moses was chosen and appointed of God to be the supreme magistrate and principal governor of God's people; and as he had by God's commandment authority to rule, even so were the Israelites bound by God's word to obey, which so long as they did, they prospered; but when they shook off the yoke of obedience, sought carnal liberty, murmured against their magistrate, and troubled the commonweal, oh how did God punish and plague them! And as David saith, The heavy wrath of God came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them, yea, and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel. (Psalm lxxviii.) For there is no power, saith St. Paul, but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (Rom. xiii.) With how grievous and horrible a leprosy did God strike Miriam for murmuring against Moses! and how he plagued the Israelites for murmuring against Him and Moses his servant, with fiery serpents, which stung them unto death! Also, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, because they did not obey Moses, God's magistrate, but disdained that he should reign over them, although appointed of God, were they not swallowed up of the earth, both they, their wives, their children, and all their goods? On the morrow after, when the people of Israel murmured against Moses, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord, and so railed on him, they escaped not unpunished. Thus see

we that in the beginning of the Israelites' publie weal, God by no means could abide rebels and seditious persons.

Eu. If God so grievously plagued those who did but murmur against his magistrates, how severely will He punish those that do not only irreverently speak of the high powers, but also gather unlawful assemblies against them, and arm themselves in such manner as though they should rise against a common pestilence of the publie weal: surely the end of such must needs be very miserable.

Ph. Absalom, king David's son made an insurrection against his father. What followed? Was not Absalom miserably slain? Did not his ungodly counsellor hang himself? Were there not also twenty thousand men slain in battle that took Absalom's part? See to what a point sedition brings its authors, counsellors, and maintainers.

Ch. It is therefore wisdom for all men to follow this counsel of the wise man: My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and keep no company with seditious persons; for their destruction shall come suddenly. Prov. xxiv.

Ph. There are many such histories in the books of the Kings and the Chronicles. I might also repeat unto you the histories of the two seditious men, Theudas and Judas of Galilee, of whom blessed Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles. We read not in all the Scriptures that any traitor, or notable seditious person, hath at any time escaped without notable punishment.

Eu. If the people in these our days had been well trained up in learning such godly histories, as they were in hearing popish masses, and such other trifling trumpery, they had raised up no such tragedies, as they have done in some parts. But it is truly said of the wise man, When the preaching of God's word faileth, the people run out of order and perish.

Th. Yet have I heard it reported that these new preachers, as they call them, through their indiscreet sermons, opened a large window unto dissoluteness of life, and by these means caused the common people to aspire, and break forth unto carnal liberty, which while they sought after, they forgot both themselves and their duty.

Ph. The faithful and discreet preachers, which are lawfully sent, and called thereunto by the secret motion of God's Spirit in their hearts, howsoever they be reported, certain I am, they never taught such doctrine as should minister occasion to godly people to shake off the zeal of obedience, or to break any good order or politie law.

Ch. Yet have I heard some preachers, whom I know to be both prudent and faithful, slandered that they by their preaching have caused these uproars.

Ph. You well said, "slandered." Were they preachers, or rather mass-mongers, that caused insurrections in Devonshire?

Ch. Mass-mongers and papists, as it is reported.

Ph. Even in Norfolk also, or elsewhere, I am sure the very rebels themselves will confess, as I have partly heard and know, that the preachers were not the authors or provokers of those commotions. Can the sermons of those who teach obedience, humility, and patience, move men unto disobedience, haughtiness of mind, and desire of revenge? Can light be the occasion of darkness, or truth of falsehood? But what is so prudently, godly, and circumspectly spoken, that envy cannot wrest and corrupt? Neither is it strange for the Christian preachers to be misreported by the voluptuous worldings and covetous churls.

How earnest a setter forth of God's glory was the prophet Elias, and yet how was he reported? Art thou he, said king Ahab, that troubled Israel? But the prophet boldly answered, It is not I that have troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and followed the way of Baal.

I let pass the other prophets, who for their godly sermons sustained the like displeasure at worldly tyrants' hands, but how was the Master of truth, the Wisdom of the Father, I mean Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose mouth was found no guile, no deceit, handled for his sermons when they brought him before Pilate? Did not his adversaries and accusers lay to his charge that he sowed sedition among the people, and that he corrupted and perverted the commons with his doctrine, that he forbade men to pay tribute to Cæsar, and that he said he himself was Christ a king? How unjustly Christ was here accused the Holy Scriptures abundantly testify. Could he be the author of sedition who came into this world to make peace? How could he corrupt and pervert the people with his doctrine when he taught nothing but that which he had heard of his Father? Can heavenly things corrupt the minds of mortal men? Did he forbid to pay tribute to Cæsar, who himself payed tribute to Cæsar, and commanded others so to do? Did he boast himself to be a

king, who fled away from the people when they would have made him their king? Said he not unto Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world? Was he disobedient to the temporal rulers, who disdained not to be brought before them, to be judged of them, yea, and to suffer death under them? Moreover, was not the blessed martyr, St. Stephen, accused that he spake blasphemous words against Moses, and against God; when of God no man ever spake more godly, nor of Moses more reverently?

Again, when St. Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica, (Acts xvii.) and St. Paul preached in the synagogue the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, how did certain of the Jews complain of them unto the heads of the city, and violently plucked them forth, accusing the apostles both of sedition and treason, and yet were they neither seditious persons nor traitors. They troubled not the world, except the world be here taken for the devilish people of the world, to whom it is a trouble to hear any thing of Christ, or to hear their abominable living rebuked. The good people of the world they quieted, and made them joyful in their conscience, as they were persuaded by the word of God which the apostles preached, that they had gotten free remission of all their sins through faith in Christ's blood.

What had Paul offended when he was seized in the temple? (Acts xix.) he spake nothing, he did nothing, but as other Jews did. It was enough that he was the Paul who had preached Christ to be the Son of God. And so did the worldly tyrants handle the good bishops and faithful ministers in the primitive church. If any mischief, plague, or evil happened, it was straightway laid to their charge. Even so likewise doth the world at this time deal with the true preachers of the Lord's word. Dearth, famine, hunger, plague, pestilence, battle, insurrections, commotions, treasons, heresies, epicures in licentious living, &c. all is imputed to the preachers of Christ's gospel. They, they, and none but they, are said to be the occasion of all that is evil, when no kind of people is further from doing harm to a commonweal; neither doth a commonweal receive more benefits of any than of the godly preacher.

If the old world had heard and obeyed the sermons of Noah, they had not perished with waters. If the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had hearkened to the sermons of Lot, they had not been consumed with fire and brimstone

rained from heaven. If the Israelites had given ear to the warnings of the prophets, they had not so often been plagued and led away into captivity. If the Jews had received the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, they and their city, with all their posterity, had not come to such a destruction. And when the Lord raised up his prophets and preachers to admonish the people of their wickedness, and to exhort them to repentance, and yet they will not amend, but cruelly entreat them, slander them, persecute them, kill them, then cometh destruction.

Ch. The scholar is not above his master, nor the servant better than his Lord. If the world hate you, saith Christ, ye know it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love that is his. But forasmuch as ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you from the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Eu. Preachers are commanded of God, under pain of damnation, to tell the people their faults, and yet, if they rebuke covetousness, then the covetous worldlings are mad. If they inveigh against pride, the proud are displeased. If they condemn licentious living, those of bad life are enraged. Look whatsoever sin they reprove, the guilty cannot abide it, but malign the preacher, and seek to do him displeasure. The Gergesenes had rather that Christ should never have come among them, yea, they had rather go to the devil than their filthy swine should be drowned.

Ph. Well, thus ye see it is no new thing for godly preachers to be slandered and burdened with those faults wherein they are nothing guilty.

Ch. I have heard it reported that divers gentlemen have been the occasion of all these tumults and seditions, through the great oppressions and wrongs that they have done to the poor commons.

Ph. You have heard my mind respecting the preachers who were slandered. I will now speak somewhat of the gentlemen. As I do not allow all that are called preachers to be such in truth, so do I not approve the doings of all that are called gentlemen. And as I do not condemn all preachers, so do I not dispraise all gentlemen, for as there are those who are true preachers indeed, so likewise are there those who are true gentlemen indeed. But as some abuse the name of preachers, so likewise are there many who are called gentlemen and are no gentlemen indeed,

but pollers and pillers,* rakers and catchers, bribers and extortioners, yea, and mere caterpillars of the commonweal, for they abuse the name of a gentleman, which is unfeignedly a name of much worship† and great honour and worthy to be had in reverence and high estimation. Without the true gentlemen, the commonweal can no more safely be, than the body without eyes. For as the eyes are the principal comfort of a whole body, so likewise are the true gentlemen of the commonweal. And, look, what the nose is without smelling, the tongue without speaking, the hands without feeling, the feet without going, the very same is a commonweal without them that are true gentlemen. As the wise man sayeth, Where no good counsel is there the people decay, but where many are that can give good counsel, there is wealth. (Prov. xi.) For such as are true gentlemen are fathers of the country, maintainers of the poor, defenders of the widows and fatherless, succourers of the needy, comforters of the comfortless, and upholders of the commonweal; in fine, gentlemen both in name and deed. These are pearls and jewels to a realm, and as necessary for the conservation of public welfare, as fire, water, and heat are for the health of man's body. For their principal respect is not unto their own private lucre and singular advantage, but their whole study is how they may profit the commonweal, and do good to many; as Solomon sayeth, The righteous laboureth to do good, but the ungodly useth his increase unto sin. (Prov. x.) Not only their goods, but their very life also, will they bestow to do good to others, so far are they from impoverishing or hindering any man for their own advantage.

Eu. Would that we had many such gentlemen.

Ph. We have, without all doubt, many, although not so many as I would wish; for of good things we can never have enough. Then there is another sort, which glory in the title of gentlemen also, and they are such as think all nobility consists in the abundance of worldly goods, in wearing of golden chains and costly apparel, in having fair houses and pleasant gardens. And to set forth this, they poll, they pill, they wake, they rake, they sweat, they fret, they grip, they nip, they face, they brase,‡ they semble, they dissemble, yea, they move every stone, as they say, to maintain and set forth their ignoble nobility, not caring

* Plunderers and robbers. † Respect.
‡ Act with impudence.

how they come by it, so they have it. All is fish that comes to the net, it is good to be taken.

These study not as the true gentlemen do, to profit many, to do good to the country, to maintain the poor, to relieve the succourless, to nourish the weak, to cherish their needy tenants; neither seek they the good of the commonweal, but their own private advantage.—Against such churlish gentlemen God speaks by the prophet, saying, O ye heads of the house of Jacob, and ye leaders of the house of Israel, should not ye know what is lawful and right? But ye hate the good and love the evil; ye pluck off men's skins, and the flesh from their bones; ye eat the flesh of my people, and flay off their skins; ye break their bones, ye chop them in pieces, as it were into a cauldron, and as flesh into a pot. (Micah iii.)

Th. These greedy gripes and hungry horseleeches, by usurping the name of gentlemen do much obscure the renown, worship, and honour, of true gentlemen, and cause the name of a gentleman to be much disdained among the common people, as we have heard and seen now of late days; and though they challenge to themselves ever so much the name of a gentleman by their goods, by their ancestors, by antiquity, by the worthiness of their stock, and many good morrows,* yet if they do degenerate and grow out of kind from the natural manners of a true gentleman, they are no gentlemen indeed, but earls and churls; yea, and in hurting their neighbours, they are tyrants and murderers, as the Holy Scripture calleth them; and in polling and pilling them, they are thence lions and wolves, as the prophet terms them. It is virtue that makes the true noble and gentleman. It is a mind disposed to do good, yea, and that doeth good indeed when occasion serves, and not sumptuous apparel and golden chains, that sets forth true nobility. It is justice, mercy, liberality, kindness, gentleness, hospitality for the poor, and such other godly gifts of the mind, and not the multitude of riches, that declare who is a gentleman, and who a churl, who is noble, who ignoble. He that can nighest approach unto true virtue, and most truly set it forth in his conversation, he is the best gentleman, whatever his birth may be.

Eu. Would that all who are taken for gentlemen, were gentlemen indeed, then should it go better with England.

* Respect paid to them.

Ch. Solomon hath a notable saying, and would that all men would learn it. It is this: The increase and prosperity of the commons is the king's honour, but the decay of the people is the confusion of the prince. (Prov. xiv.)

Ph. Well, neighbours, though I doubt not but that the king's majesty and his most honourable council will see redress in these things when they have convenient leisure, yet even if the world should go forth and continue as it is, and the rich worldlings more miserably oppress the poor than they heretofore have done, God forbid that the common people, or any kind of people, should raise up tumults, stir up seditions, and lift up their hands against the high powers; for that is a sin which by no means can escape unplagued, yea, they that do so, run into the danger of eternal damnation, as you have heard before.

Ch. I say God forbid also; but ye know the common proverbs—The belly hath no ears. Hunger is sharper than thorns. Necessity is a hard dart.

Ph. St. Paul had rather never have eaten flesh or drunk wine than offend his weak brother; would he then, think you, have troubled whole commonwealths, made uproars, raised up commotions, come armed to the field, and have assembled a sort of idle brainless people together, to rob men's houses, spoil their goods, break up their hedges, to make separate pastures common to all men, to make a communion, yea, confusion of all things; and all for the belly? St. Paul would rather, like poor Lazarus, have died for hunger, than once violently and unjustly have taken away other men's goods.

Ch. What! would you have the poor starve and die for hunger, as poor Lazarus, rather than trouble a commonweal?

Ph. As riches, so likewise poverty, cometh from God, and both are to be taken thankfully, and not to be grudged at. If oppression be done to the poor by the rich worldlings, shall they avenge themselves? Rather let them take their cross patiently, and think they have deserved far worse things, who have so often deserved hell. Let them pray to God to give those rich men merciful hearts, that according to their duty they may be moved with pity and compassion toward the poor. Again, if they have injuries done unto them, if they cannot otherwise be redressed, let them complain to the magistrates and officers of the commonweal, who are appointed to hear men's causes.

Whoso leaves godly means, and attempts wicked ways,

both he and his enterprise must needs come to nought, as we have seen of late days. The Lord himself hath spoken it: "All they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword." All they that are private men and go about with force and violence to avenge their own cause, shall surely come unto destruction; for they are order-breakers and despisers of God's holy ordinance; who hath appointed magistrates and rulers justly to judge between man and man in all matters of controversy, that peace and quietness may be maintained in a commonweal.

Th. If men were Christian men in deed, as they profess in word, they would never for the belly's sake go about to disturb, trouble, and disquiet all the members of the body. There is a proverb no less true than common, "God never made a mouth but he made meat." And truly I am thus persuaded, that God, who made me a living soul, will not, after he hath brought me into this world, suffer me to perish for hunger, if I hang on his fatherly providence, cast my care on him, seek to please him, and live in my vocation according to his word.

Ph. I am glad, neighbour, to hear you speak thus; for to tell you truth, the principal cause why I so greatly desired to speak with you and with my other neighbours here, was to comfort and strengthen you against this anxious care and thought taking for the belly, wherewith many at this present are much vexed. For I am not ignorant what an importunate suitor the belly is, and how it is ever craving and casting doubts, fearing that it should never have enough, and therefore continually knocks at the door of the mind to put her in remembrance to provide for her, saying, Bring hither, bring in. For the idle belly continually consumes and wastes; but gets and provides nothing; therefore is it full of thought and care for its living. This belly care causes lawyers to corrupt the law; officers to be untrue to their lords and masters; hypocrites to corrupt the Holy Scriptures; rich men to be unliberal, unmerciful; beneficed men to receive much and distribute little; patrons of benefices to sell their benefices to unlearned priests; parents to sell their children, like calves and sheep, for money; the papists to hate the truth of God's word; the merchant to forswear himself in selling his merchandize; the craftsman to make and utter false and slighty wares; the temporal lord to raise his rents, or to take great fines and incomes; the innkeeper to poll and pill his guests;

the servant to rob his master; the maid her mistress; the subject to rise against his superiors, &c. Innumerable evils doth this belly care bring unto men, against which, except they are well furnished both with strong faith in God's holy providence, and also fortressed with the knowledge of Holy Scriptures, wherein are contained such great consolations for the faithful, they cannot abide the importunate and continual suit of the sluggish belly, but must needs despair of satisfying its requests, and not only have an unquiet mind, but also throw themselves into desperation, and so wretchedly finish this their careful life.

Ch. This belly care without doubt is a great temptation to a man, and very much disquiets him, namely, when he sees all things so dear as they are now, and despairs of redress. Therefore, neighbour Philemon, you cannot treat of any thing more suitable for this wretched time, than to declare unto us, by the Holy Scriptures, how merciful and bounteous a Lord we have in heaven, who will not suffer us to perish for hunger, if we depend on his fatherly providence, and cast all our care on him.

Ph. That ye may be thoroughly persuaded of God's liberality towards his faithful servants, I pray you, first of all, consider God's order in the provision for his creatures. Before God made man, whom he was determined to make the high ruler, under himself, over all things in this world, he made and prepared every thing necessary for him, and for the preservation of his body, that he might abundantly have whatsoever is expedient for him, and by no means perish for hunger and lack of food. First, placing him in paradise, that garden of pleasure, he gave man liberty to eat of all the fruit that grew in the garden, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. After the transgression of God's commandment, when man was justly driven out of paradise, and for his disobedience deserved not only to starve for hunger, but also to be condemned for ever, if God for his mercies' sake, promised in the blessed Seed Christ Jesus, had not favoured and forgiven him, God sending forth man into this vale of misery, did not leave him comfortless and without provision for his bodily sustenance, neither sent he him into a barren desert, or salt ground, void of all fruit, but into this world, where he found plenty and abundance of all things, and gave him liberty to eat of all fruits and seeds growing

in it. Increase, saith he, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold I have given you every herb sowing seed which is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of the tree, and that soweth seed, that they may be meat unto you. With this kind of food was Adam and his posterity content until the flood of Noah. After the flood, God purposing, as it were, to renew mankind, and to be man's good and merciful Lord, and no less, but much more bountiful unto him than he was before, said, Bring ye forth, and multiply and replenish the earth. The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and in all such as the earth bringeth forth, and in all the fishes of the sea; into your hands are they delivered. Every thing that moveth itself, and that liveth shall be meat for you. Even as the green herb have I given you all things. As God before gave man liberty to eat all kind of herbs, seeds, and fruits, that grow upon the earth, so likewise gave he man authority, to eat all kinds of fish or flesh.

Ch. Oh exceeding great is the liberality of our Lord God, who deals so favourably with wretched man!

Ph. Even from the beginning, and the repairing of man, the kindness of God bursts out and shows forth itself abundantly toward man, so that now all things are pure to them that are pure. Nothing is common or unclean, neither is any kind of meat to be refused, if it be taken with thanksgiving. For that which God hath purified and made clean, ought no man to call impure or unclean. And all these things hath God given us to eat.

Now that you may be thoroughly persuaded of God's truth in performing his promises, call to remembrance the histories of the Holy Scriptures, which declare and evidently prove that God is faithful in all his words and deals no less favourably with his servants in deeds than he promises in words. God commanded Abraham to get him out of his country, and out of his nation, and from his father's house, unto a land which he would show him. Abraham did as the Lord commanded him. If Abraham had not been fully persuaded of God's constancy and truth in accomplishing his promises, would he have forsaken his native country and gone out of his own house where he

was quietly placed and wealthily settled, and have wandered abroad he could not tell whither?

Eu. A carnal and worldly wise man would think it madness to leave a certain thing for that which is uncertain.

Ph. So judges the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness before God. Notwithstanding, Abraham, nothing doubting of God's promise, forsook country, nation, and house, and obeyed the voice and commandment of God. Neither was he impoverished thereby. The Scripture saith, he was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold. For his native country, God gave him a country that flowed with milk and honey, that is, with abundance of all things. For one house he gave him many houses. For one nation he made him a father of many nations. So God recompenses the losses that any man sustains for his sake.

Th. The like is promised by our Saviour Christ in his gospel. He saith, There is no man that hath forsaken house, or father, or mother, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this world, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

Ph. Who is not greatly encouraged, even by this one example, to believe the promise of God? For there is no respect of persons with him, but in all people, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted. The promise of God is universal. Whosoever, therefore, layeth hand on it with strong faith, he shall have of God whatsoever he hath promised. There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, for one is Lord of all, who is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord he shall be safe.

Ch. It is not without a cause that the apostles prayed, "Lord, increase our faith." For if true and undoubted faith were in the hearts of men, they would neither distrust the promise of God, nor despair of a convenient living.

Ph. Faith is much—yea faith is altogether. Whatsoever ye ask when ye pray, saith Christ, believe to have it, and ye shall have it indeed. As God showed himself faithful in his promise to Abraham, who is the father of the faithful, so likewise did he to others; because no man should doubt of his liberality, which was extended not to Abraham only, but to all the faithful in like manner. When Hagar's son Ishmael was a mocker, so that Sarah caused Abraham to put them both out, Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and

gave it unto Hagar, and sent them away. Now, mark, Hagar is put out of her master's house with her child. She knows not where to go. She has no house wherein to hide her head, but wanders up and down in the wilderness of Beersheba. No man is willing to comfort her—for no man is present. Her provision is all spent. The bread is eaten, the water is drunk up. There remains apparently nothing more but utterly to despair of succour, and to die miserably! Hagar, considering this, casts the lad Ishmael under a bush, goes away, and sits on the other side a great way off, because she would not see the death of the child. With how great sorrow her heart was filled; what tears gushed out of her eyes; what anxious faintness seized her whole body, no man is able to express. A child to die for hunger, the mother knowing of it, yea, and as it were in her sight, in her bosom! Oh grief unspeakable! The mother likewise pierced with the same dart, Oh incomparable pain! All things are brought here to extreme desperation—there is no way to escape this present mischief. The child crieth, the mother weepeth. Both look for present death. But what? Is God untrue? unjust, false in his promise? Stoppeth he his ears, that he may not hear the lamentable complaints of these most wretched? Despises he the tears of the mother and the cryings of the child? Yea, rather when no remedy is looked for, God is present; God comforts, God helps, because he will be found a God who is faithful in all his words, who is the truth and cannot lie, who leaves no man succourless that calls upon Him. He sends his angel to the miserable woman when no mortal creature was present to help. He comforts her, and bids her not fear; for God hath heard, saith he, the voice of the child. He showed her a well of water, and afterwards promised that the lad Ishmael should be a great man, and that multitudes of people shall rise from him.

Th. Oh history full of sweet consolation! This is a comfortable and pleasant mirror for all people to behold, especially for those who are married and who see not, their poverty being so great, how they may be able to nourish their families. If the married folk live according to their calling, and labour in their state, in the fear of the Lord, though they have ever so many children, and ever so great a family, yet shall the sea sooner be without water and fish, and the land without grass and cattle, than any of

them shall perish for hunger. If God provided for Ishmael and his mother in the wilderness, where no sustenance was to be gotten, where no man was present, but only brute beasts and fowls of the air; will he leave them succourless that put their trust in him, they being in cities, towns, and villages, and where all things abound?

Ch. If poor married men did earnestly weigh, and diligently ponder this most sweet and comfortable history, they would never despair of a living either for themselves, or for their children and family; neither would they seek any unlawful means, as by stirring up commotions, making insurrections, spoiling other men's goods, &c., how to avoid their misery; but would rather labour to answer their vocation, and without ceasing call on the name of the Lord, who will deal no less favourably with them than he did with Hagar and Ishmael.

Put thou thy trust, saith David, in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the earth and be fed. Delight thou in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy heart's desire. Commit thy way to the Lord, and put thy trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass. He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noon day. Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him, &c. Again, Put your trust in God always, O ye people, pour out your hearts before him, for he is our hope.

Ph. In the days of Isaac, Abraham's son, there was a great dearth in the land where he dwelt, so that he took his journey toward Abimelech, king of the Philistines. And God spake unto him and said, Go not down into Egypt, but abide in the land which I shall show unto thee. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee. For unto thee and to thy seed I will give all this country. Behold God's careful providence for his servants. Isaac wishing to escape the cruel darts of hunger, sought where he and his might dwell. But God who is able to feed and to save his people in every place, for the earth is the Lord's, and all that is contained therein, forbade Isaac to go down into Egypt; he willed him to tarry still in that country, and promised to bless him, yea, to give to him and his seed, all that land. Isaac, obeying the voice of God, tarried in that country, and waxed exceeding mighty, wealthy, and rich. Insomuch that the king himself came unto him, and desired to make a covenant of peace with him. Unto such power was Isaac grown. He who before

knew not where to live, even he became so rich in the country which he would have forsaken for penury and hunger, that the king himself was glad to desire his favour. God is the same God to us all that he was to Abraham and Isaac, if we by strong faith hang upon him, and on his fatherly providence, as they did; if the same integrity of manners, and innocency of life appears in us, that shone in them.

Eu. This beneficence of God towards Isaac ought to encourage all men to tarry at home in their own countries and houses, to be content with their state and calling, and not to stray abroad for their living, as many idle brains do now-a-days, leaving their wives and children in great care and misery, and many never returning to them. Neither ought men to doubt, but that God who is almighty, and able to do whatsoever his good pleasure is, will as well provide for them at home in their poor cottages, as in the halls of princes. The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, as for anxiety in labour it doth nothing thereto.

Ph. When Isaac sent his son Jacob to Mesopotamia, that he might take to wife one of the daughters of Laban, Jacob, as he passed forth on his journey, made a vow and said, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this journey which I go, and will give me bread to eat, and clothes to put on, so that I come again unto my father's house in safety, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set up shall be God's house, and of all that thou shalt give me, will I give the tenth unto thee. Here Jacob desired God's assistance in his journey, that he may go and come safely. And as concerning worldly goods, he desired nothing more than food and raiment. And so, doubting nothing of God's help, he went forward on his journey, according to the commandment of his father. Now behold the loving kindness of God towards Jacob. According to God's promise, Jacob had a prosperous journey into Mesopotamia. When Laban heard of his coming, for very joy he ran to meet him, embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So God who hath all men's hearts in his hands, worketh for his servants. Jacob tarried with Laban twenty years, and God so blessed Jacob, that he became exceedingly rich, and afterward God brought him home again safely.

Eu. This history is exceedingly comfortable for all godly travellers; hereof they may learn that God will not

forsake them, nor leave them succourless, but will send them all things needful in their journey, defend them from their enemies, and safely bring them home again, if they call on his holy name, and cast their care upon him.

Ch. So saith the psalmist, My help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved, and he that keepeth thee will not sleep. Behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord himself is thy keeper, the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand. So that the sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and for evermore.

Th. These are sweet and comfortable Scriptures.

Ph. They are so to the faithful who depend altogether on God, and on his fatherly providence. But the unfaithful, who trust on themselves, on their own wisdom and policy, feel no savour nor sweetness in them. As St. Paul saith, A natural man perceiveth not the things that belong to the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him.

But let us behold more histories, which declare and set forth God's high providence and singular liberality towards his servants, that we may learn perfectly to depend upon the Lord our God. In the time of Jacob there was a great dearth. Now God, foreseeing this famine, that his servants should not perish in time of hunger, wonderfully sent Joseph before into Egypt. And although his brothers sold him into a strange land, by this means seeking his destruction, yet God turned his servitude unto his honour, and the evil that they did to their brother to their advantage. For God exalted Joseph, and set him above all the lords and princes of Egypt.—To be short, for the history is well known, when the sons of Jacob came thither for victual, there was Joseph their brother in high authority. They had victuals home with them, and their money also, and at the last, Jacob and all his family were honourably brought thither, and quietly and wealthily placed in the land of Egypt. All this came to pass by the providence of God, who worketh wonderfully for the safeguard and welfare of his servants. For the cause that Jacob and his children found such favour in the sight of king Pharaoh, was not fortune or chance, but God's providence. Again, the cause that Joseph was exalted to such dignity, was not his fair face, nor his goodly person,

but God's good will; which gave him such wisdom as none had the like in all Egypt, neither was there any one found like unto Joseph, whom the king might make governor over his realm. And all these things God wrought for the preservation of his servants, as Joseph himself said to his brethren.

Ch. Oh the unspeakable good will of God towards all that trust in Him! What other nation, saith Moses, is so great, that hath gods so nigh to them, as the Lord our God is nigh unto us in all things, so oft as we call unto him. The prophet said, The Lord our God cherishes us as a father doth his son. Will a mother forget her child, saith God, and not pity the son whom she did bear? Though she doth forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold I have written thee upon the palms of my hands.

Eu. The saying of king David does not much differ from this. Behold, the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, and upon them that trust in his mercy; that he may deliver their lives from death, and nourish them in the time of hunger.

Ph. After God had delivered the Israelites out of Egypt with an outstretched arm, and had brought them into the wilderness of Sin, where they saw neither meat nor drink; for God was determined to prove them whether they were faithful or not; they grudged against Moses and Aaron, saying, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full. For ye have brought us out into this wilderness to kill the whole multitude with hunger.—You see the unthankfulness of this people, for whom God had wrought so many wonders, and to whom God had shown such great tokens of loving kindness, even as a father doth unto his child. You have heard how they murmured against Moses and Aaron, God's lawful ministers, which is nothing else than to murmur against God himself. You see their unfaithfulness, and how they altogether swerved from God, and from his holy providence, so that they deserved no benefit at the hand of God. But what then? Is God false to his promise? Yea, rather even for his promise sake, (whereunto God hath ever chief respect,) which he made unto their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he wonderfully sent down meat from heaven, even manna, and so fed them.

Th. If God for his promises' sake fed the unfaithful, and

no less unthankful Israelites from heaven, we that believe his promises and depend only on him and his fatherly providence, may be sure not to want, but shall abundantly have whatsoever is necessary for us. As the psalmist saith, The eyes of all look and wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou givest them meat in due time. Thou openest thy hand and replenishest all things living with thy blessing. Again, They that fear the Lord shall have no scarceness. They which seek the Lord shall want no good thing.

Ph. As the Israelites murmured for meat, so likewise did they for water. But the Lord God, still considering his promises, and not weighing their infidelity and unthankfulness, wonderfully and against all natural and human expectation, gave them plenty of sweet water out of the hard stony rock. At another time the base people among them, being weary of the meat sent from heaven, fell a lusting, and wept and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat, &c.

Ch. It was not without a cause that Stephen called that nation stiff-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ears, and such as always resist the Holy Ghost.

Ph. Yet notwithstanding their unbelief, unthankfulness, and disobedience, God still continued just in his promises, faithful in his words, and true in his dealings. God for his promise sake cherished the Israelites, even as the nurse doth her sucking babe; and fed them by the space of forty years in the wilderness, without their pains, care, or labour.

Th. If God showed such gentleness to the unfaithful and disobedient for his promise sake, how much more will he show himself a gentle and loving Father to them that fear him, believe in him, love him, and, according to their power, labour to walk in his holy paths?

Ph. Such shall never want. Now mark what follows. As God provided meat for the Israelites, so in like manner suffered he them not to go naked, nor to perish for cold; but all that time of forty years when they were in the wilderness, he so preserved their clothes, that they waxed not old, and so saved their shoes that they were not worn; but both garments and shoes were as whole at the forty years' end, as at their first coming into the wilderness.

Eu. These histories so set forth the kindness of God towards man, that none except infidels have just occasion to despair of God's liberality, if they call upon his name, and labour according to their vocation.

Ph. Who knoweth not that Elias was an excellent pro-

phet of God, fervent in spirit, vehement in word, and jealous for the glory of God? This man of God lived in the time of Ahab, when God sent a great dearth. In that plague of famine, whereof innumerable died, see how God provided for his servant Elias. First, when the waters began to be dried up, God sent him to the brook Cherith, where he promised to give him drink, which he unfeignedly performed. Now as touching his meat, behold the wonderful power of God, who commanded the ravens to feed him, and to give him meat! Oh what a God the faithful have, how tender and gentle, how loving and kind is he to all them that put their trust in him! Rather than his servant should die for meat, he maketh the fowls of the air to bring him things necessary for the sustenance of his body. O behold and diligently mark the fatherly care which the Lord God hath for his servants! Even as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful to them that fear him. It is truly said by the psalmist: The Lord is at hand to all them that call on him, yea, to all them that call on him in truth.

Ch. There is no respect of persons with God. And whatsoever is written, is written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope.

Ph. Neither did the care of God for his servant Elias cease with that benefit. For God is no changeling; whom he loveth, he loveth to the end. Therefore when the brook was dried up, God, who never leaves his servants succourless, said to Elias, Get thee to Sarepta; behold I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee. Read the first book of Kings, chapter xvii. There again you see what provision God made for Elias, and how beneficial He also was to the hostess of Elias, and to her household, because she entertained him kindly, and did what he commanded. At another time when he fled from wicked Jezebel, as you may read, God sent his angel unto him, even when he was asleep, with a loaf of bread and a vessel of water. And in the strength of that meat, he walked forty days and forty nights, even unto Horeb the mount of God. Here you see that when we sleep, God watches and cares for us, even as he cared for Peter, and sent his angel to deliver him out of prison, when Peter was sound asleep and thought nothing at all of the matter.

Ch. It is truly said by the princely prophet, They that seek the Lord shall want no good thing.

Th. These are comfortable histories for Christian and godly preachers, whom for the most part the wicked and unthankful world neglects, despises, and sets nought by, yea, and makes less provision for them than for their horses and dogs. Here may the true preachers see that although the world regards them not, and suffers them, so far as it is with them, not only to live miserably, but also to perish for hunger; yet God, whose ministers they are, whose word they preach, will not suffer them extremely to want, but will either feed them wonderfully himself, as he fed Elias, or else will raise up some good Obadiah to make provision for them; as Obadiah did for the prophets of the Lord when they were hidden in the caves from the tyranny of queen Jezebel.

Ph. We read also how a certain woman came to Elisha the prophet. This woman was a prophet's wife. Her husband was dead, which left her both poor and in debt. Comfort she has none, but only the company of her two sons whom the creditor would take away and make his bondmen, because she is not able to discharge the debt. In what misery is this careful woman! She has nothing at all in her house but a pitcher of oil. But what is that to make payment of the debt? And if that be gone, there remains nothing whereof she and her sons may live. What then is to be done? The sorrowful widow first laments her cause secretly in her heart to God, who is the helper and patron of all true widows and fatherless children, and afterwards utters the same to Elisha, the prophet of God, who through God's blessing, from one pitcher of oil caused her to fill so many empty vessels full of oil, that she, selling part of the same, was not only able to pay her debts to the utmost, but also had enough of the rest to provide for herself and her children.

Ch. This woman's husband was a prophet, and feared the Lord, therefore she and her children could not long remain comfortless. For God hath promised to be a husband to such widows, and a father to such godly men's children. The psalmist saith, I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor their children begging their bread on the earth.

Th. This is a comfortable history for such godly women as are Christian preachers' wives. Hereof may they learn, that though their husbands be ever so poor when they depart out of this world, yet if they remain faithful, and in

the fear of God, and diligently call on his blessed name in their adversity, he will neither suffer them nor their children to lack necessaries, but will, by one means or another, send them all good things, so that they shall not want. God saith, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.—The Lord giveth meat to the hungry.—Behold the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, and upon them that trust in his merey, that he may deliver their lives from death, and nourish them in time of hunger.

Ph. We also read that at another time, the prophet Elisha in time of dearth fed the prophets' children, (2 Kings iv.) and with a few loaves nourished a great number of men, insomuch that they did not only eat enough, but also left much of the bread.—See ye not here what the blessing of the Lord is, and how all things increase and abound when the Lord openeth his hand? If God bless us we cannot want, but if God's blessing be taken from us, we must needs perish.

Eu. So saith the psalmist, All creatures depend upon thee, O Lord, that thou shouldest give them their meat in due time. For thou giving it to them, they take it; and thou opening thine hand, they are well satisfied. But thou hiding thy face, they are sorrowful; thou taking away their breath, they are but dead, and turned unto the earth from whence they came.

Ch. The history of Daniel is very comfortable for all them that suffer imprisonment for the glory of God, and the confession of his truth. Hereof may they learn, that God will not leave them succourless and destitute of help. As David saith, The Lord is my light and my health, whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid? When mine enemies came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Therefore though a host of men were set against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid; yea, though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.

Ph. As I may also rehearse certain histories out of the New Testament, that we may learn God's liberality towards his servants is the same at all times and in all ages, let us call to remembrance the wonderful miracles which Christ wrought for the sustenance of his people. Read we not that our Saviour Christ at a certain time fed about five thousand men, and at another time four thousand, besides women and children, with a few loaves. Also when Christ

and his mother, with his disciples, were at the marriage in Cana, as the guests wanted wine, he spared not his liberality from them. Did he not turn the water into wine? Surely they can want nothing that have Christ present with them. Let us provide that we have Christ among us, and we may be sure to have abundance of all good things.

Eu. This history is very comfortable for all married persons, who marry in the Lord. All such as so marry, and continue in the fear of God, may be sure that the water in their wells shall sooner be turned into wine, and the stone of their walls into bread, and the clay of their floors into meat, and the thatch of their houses into cloth, than they shall in extremity want necessary things for themselves or their families.

Ch. Would that all men believed this. Then should they have quiet minds, where now, through unbelief, they are miserably disquieted with the care of worldly things.

Ph. Again, how did our Saviour Christ provide for his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach without money or meat? The disciples, according to their vocation, went forth and preached the gospel, not doubting but He that sent them would provide for them. For what good master can find in his heart to see his servants need?

Ch. This is very comfortable for the true preachers of God's word. Of this they may be well assured—that if they do their Master's message faithfully, they shall not want, though the wicked world be ever so unthankful and niggardly unto them.

Ph. How comfortable are these words of our Saviour Christ, to a faithful Christian man: I say unto you, Be not careful for the life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life worth more than meat, and the body of more value than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor yet carry into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them, &c. Read Matthew vi.

Behold what goodly and natural examples our Saviour Christ bringeth forth here, that he may allure us to trust only on God's providence, and not to be careful for the necessaries of this life, which are not gotten by painful travail, but are received of God's mere liberality. And because we should not be careful for meat, he first sets before our eyes the fowls of the air for our example. Seeing that God the Father feeds them so plenteously that

they want for nothing, much more will he feed us with whatever is necessary for us, if we call on his name, and live according to our vocation. If he feeds the birds because they are his creatures, which notwithstanding so die, that they never live afterwards, much more will he provide for us, who not only are his creatures, but also created after his own image, endued with an immortal soul, and made unto this end—that we should set forth his glory, and praise his blessed name. And after the general resurrection, our bodies and souls being knit together, live with him in glory, world without end, as his lawful heirs through Jesus Christ our Lord. And as touching our apparel—if God so decks the transitory flower, which this day is pleasantly growing in the field, and to-morrow shall be cut down and cast into the furnace, how much more will he send us convenient apparel for our bodies, which though they once die, yet shall rise again and for ever live with God in eternal glory. Christ therefore declares that these things shall be cast unto us, if we seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. As the psalmist saith, God gives food to the cattle, and feeds the young ravens that call upon him. He feeds the infidels, for their creation sake, and his mercy sake. He therefore will not leave them that are his faithful people unprovided, succourless, and destitute of help. He gives the vile worms of the earth, not only their being, but also whereof to live; he therefore will not see the faithful man want, who is made like unto his own similitude and image. God gave us the life, God will preserve the life. God gave us the body, God will clothe the body. Away then with careful pensiveness and anxious care. Let us cast our eyes on God's most holy and infallible providence, which is certain and never fails. Take heed and beware of covetousness, saith our Saviour Christ, for no man's life standeth in the abundance of things which he possesses.

Eu. I beseech God to give us all grace so to do.

Ph. Furthermore, that we should be certain of corporeal necessaries, Christ our Saviour hath commanded us in that prayer which we commonly call the paternoster, that we should ask our heavenly Father for bodily sustenance.

Ch. Of whom should the child crave but of his father?

Ph. To make us thoroughly assured of this, what comfortable promises have we in the Holy Scriptures! Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock,

and it shall be opened unto you. For whosoever asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Is there any man among you, who if his son asked him for bread, would offer him a stone? Or if he asked for fish, would he proffer him a serpent? If ye then which are evil can give to your children good gifts, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. vii.) Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall have it, and it shall be done unto you. (Mark xi.) Verily, Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. (John xvi.) The Lord is at hand, saith St. Paul. Be not careful, but in all things show your petition unto God, in prayer and supplication with giving of thanks. Many other most sweet and comfortable promises have we in the Holy Scriptures, whereby we are assured to obtain of God whatsoever we ask of him, being agreeable to his most holy will.

Eu. To ask for things needful, is according to God's will.

Ph. Truth. For God has commanded us so to do, and has promised that he will hear us. Jacob and Solomon, as the Scripture witnesses, asked of God things necessary for their living, and were heard.

Ch. Although we ought to depend on God's providence, and by strong faith and fervent prayer look for all good things at his hand, yet we may not be idle, and lie gaping, expecting that God will put meat into our mouths like careless swine.

Ph. Surely not. For as the holy man Job said, A man is born to labour, even as the bird is to fly. From the beginning God appointed man to labour, saying, In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread, until thou returnest unto the earth, whence thou wast taken. For earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return. David also saith, Thou shalt eat the labours of thine own hands. St. Paul giveth a commandment, that if any man will not labour, he should not eat, and gives a charge that all men work with quietness, and eat their own bread. We beseech you, brethren, saith he, that ye study to be quiet, and to meddle with your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you. Again, Let him that stole, steal no more, but let him rather labour with his

hands some good thing, that ye may have to give to him that needeth.

St. Paul calls it theft for any man to live of the labour of other men's hands, idly and without any certain vocation, and commands that all such should labour, and get them some honest occupation, whereby they may be the more able, both to find themselves, and also to distribute unto others that have need. Our first father Adam toiled in the earth according to God's commandment, and so gained his living. Cain was a ploughman. Abel was a shepherd, and so you will find of all the patriarchs, prophets, and saints of the Old and New Testaments, every man had some vocation. All the priests and levites of the old law, every man according to his vocation, laboured by giving attendance in the temple, by killing of beasts and offering sacrifices, by studying the Scriptures of God, and teaching the same unto the people. Christ himself was a carpenter; the apostles of Christ were fishers. Paul laboured with his own hands, and got his own living, and so did others that were with him, and so did all the saints in the New Testament. Dorcas, that virtuous woman, made garments with her own hands, and gave them to the poor.

There was no good and godly man ever from the beginning of the world, who hath not practised somewhat to get his living, and lived in some certain, honest, and godly vocation, wherein he might with a good conscience eat his bread. The magistrate is called of God to rule with the temporal sword, to be governor of the people, to promote God's word, to nourish the preachers of the same, to exercise justice, and to seek the quietness and the advantage of the subjects, even as the father seeks the health and profit of his own son. The spiritual minister is appointed of God to rule with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to rebuke sinners with the law, yea, and to excommunicate them, if they are obstinate and will not repent; to comfort and cherish the weak with the sweet promises of the Holy Scripture; to encourage the strong, and to exhort them to go forward; to administer the sacraments; to make collections for the poor; to maintain hospitality for the relief of the needy. The subject is called of God to obey, and to be in subjection unto his superiors, and every one of them is bound by the commandment of God to live in their vocation. The lawyer in pleading and de-

fending poor men's causes. The tradesman according to his calling. The schoolmaster in bringing up his scholars virtuously and godly, the father of the household to provide for his family, the mother of the household to look upon things pertaining to the house, and to see her family well governed, and so forth in all other persons, in whatsoever state God hath called them. Every man in his vocation ought to labour, and by no means to be idle. And whoever doth so, God will bless his labours, and send him therewith abundantly to live.

Th. The wise man saith, The sluggard plougheth not for cold, wherefore he beggeth in harvest, and getteth nothing. He that gathereth in harvest is a wise son, but he that is idle in summer, is the son of confusion.

Ph. God indeed has promised to feed us, but yet so that we ourselves labour for our living. God hath promised us salvation in Christ Jesus, yet so that we believe his promise, and labour to the uttermost of our power to frame our lives according to his blessed will. David saith not only TRUST IN THE LORD, but he adds unto it AND DO GOOD. (Ps. xxxvii.) All our affiance and trust must be reposed in God, and all good things must be looked for at his hand, yet must we do what lieth in our power concerning all those things that we desire to obtain of God.

Therefore Christ saith, Take no thought. He saith not, Labour not. The pensive care and thought-taking for our living, wherewith the heathen are so greatly disquieted, we must cast away from us and lay it upon God who careth for us. But as for labour, which is laid upon us of God, as a cross for our sin and disobedience in Adam, we may not refuse it, every man in his vocation; but joyfully take it upon us, and give God thanks that by such means, without our care and thought-taking, he will feed us according to his word. For what are all our pains, labours, and travails, if God bless them not? As the psalmist saith, Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, he that keepeth it watcheth but in vain.

Ch. Methinks the occasion of this dearth, wherewith we are now oppressed, is not so greatly to be ascribed unto the covetousness of certain greedy gripes, as unto our own selves, unto our ungodliness and dissolute life, who so live as though there were no God at all, so behave ourselves as though there were neither heaven nor hell. Those who

have the gospel in their lips, live so contrary to the doctrine of the gospel, as though there were no gospel at all. In ambition, in pride, in covetousness, in envy, in malice, in wantonness of life, &c. they give place to none. Another sort are so drowned in papistry, in superstition, in hypocrisy, &c., and burn with such hatred against God's word, that they can neither abide it (otherwise than according to their fancy,) nor the preachers of it, nor yet such as advance it. Can God do otherwise than send his plagues where such impiety and ungodliness reign? It cometh from God's great mercies that we are not consumed, and even as Sodom and Gomorrah. But our own damnation sleepeth not, if we do not both shortly and earnestly repent and amend.

Ph. Truth it is indeed, that God many times sends the plague of famine into the world for sin, as it came to pass in the time of that most wicked and idolatrous king Ahab, and at divers other times. And Moses, in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, sets forth at large, the many and great blessings that come to those who hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord, to observe and to do all his commandments, and the curses that shall come upon them that hearken not to the same. Read that chapter.—The prophet Isaiah also saith, If ye be loving and obedient, ye shall eat the good things of the earth. But if ye be obstinate and rebellious, ye shall be devoured with the sword. For thus the Lord hath promised with his own mouth. (Isaiah i.) These sentences, with many others in Holy Scripture, evidently show that famine and hunger are sent by God for our sins.

Eu. It is needful therefore that we all hearken to the admonition of God, given by the psalmist, which is, That there be no strange God among us, and that we worship no other God but him alone, who only is the Lord our God that delivered us out of the spiritual Egypt, that is, from the servitude and tyranny of Satan. (Psalm lxxxi.) If we do so, God promises that he will give us whatsoever we ask of him. He will feed us with the finest wheat flour, yea, and satisfy us with honey out of the stony rock. But to obtain of God this abundance and wealth, we must worship him, and have no strange gods. Strange gods are not only idols and mammets* made of wood and stone, which in times past the simple and foolish ignorant people worshipped as gods; but the abominable vices which now so

* Puppets, images.

commonly reign among us. I mean covetousness, pride, ambition, gluttony, lewdness, malice, &c. These are strange gods. These must be put out of our hearts if we will have God to be merciful and liberal to us. For is it reasonable for us to serve strange gods, and to give ourselves over as bond slaves unto them, and yet to require our wages and reward of the true and only living God? What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What company hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? either what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (2 Cor. vi.) How agreeth the temple of God with idols? Know ye not, saith St. Paul, how that to whomsoever ye commit yourselves as servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Rom. vi.) Christ saith, Every one that doth sin is the servant of sin. (John viii.) We must be God's servants before we flatter ourselves with obtaining the good things promised by God, or else we deceive ourselves. If once we be the servants of God, and faithfully continue in his service, then may we be bold to ask our wages of him, and to persuade ourselves that all the comfortable histories and sentences which we read in the Holy Scriptures pertain unto us.

Ph. I confess all this to be true. Neither meant I by talking so much of God's gentleness and liberality, and by alleging these comfortable histories and sentences, to establish the idolaters in their idolatry, the wicked in their wickedness, the covetous worldlings in their covetousness, the proud in their pride, the lewd in their lewdness, the idle in their idleness, and yet that notwithstanding, they should look for all those good things at the hand of God which belong unto his servants, as he witnesses by the prophet. (Isa. lxv.) But I meant to declare for your comfort and mine, that so many as give themselves over unto God, believe in him, fear him, serve him, and live according to their vocation, shall never perish for hunger, but at all times have whatsoever is necessary for them. And if any should famish, which seldom or never happens, God suffers them so to do, partly that he may sooner call them unto his glory, partly that their death may turn to the greater damnation of such unmerciful monsters as suffered the servants of God to perish for hunger.

Eu. I spake that which I spake, to this end, that men

should not flatter themselves with the sweet and comfortable promises of God, when they live in all wickedness and abomination; which promises pertain not unto them, but unto the faithful servants of God, who shall enjoy no less at the hand of God than he hath promised. If they will enjoy the same advantages, they must do the like service. They must put away their strange and newly found gods; I mean pride, covetousness, gluttony, whoredom, malice, &c., and serve the only true and living God.

Ph. Well neighbours, to sum up our talk in a few words, you have heard how beneficial God is to those who put their trust in him, and live according to their vocation, so that those who are faithful need not despair of comfort, though the scarcity of things be even so great, that it almost brings present death with it. For in that dearth and penury, the faithful man who casts his care on God, and depends wholly on his fatherly providence, may well say with the psalmist, If I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not fear any evil, for thou art with me. God is ever present with his people in all their tribulation, and he will undoubtedly deliver them, and save them harmless. This now remains—when you come among the poor needy Christians, comfort them with these sweet Scriptures which you have heard, which without doubt shall much quiet their minds, and restrain them from attempting any unlawful redress of things. Again, according to your ability relieve their poverty with your riches. Exhort your rich neighbours likewise to do good to the poor, as the faithful stewards of God, remembering it is unto that end God hath endowed them with their possessions. Pray unto God that he may give a merciful and liberal heart unto the covetous worldlings, that after this they may no less willingly seek the profit of their neighbours, than hitherto they have sought their own private lucre and individual advantage. To conclude, Pray unto God, that every one of us may so live, and so frame our lives according to his will, that he may vouchsafe to bless us and send us what is needful for us, that we may the more freely, and with the more quiet minds, serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

THE

CHRISTIAN KNIGHT,

TEACHING WARRIORS OF GOD NOT ONLY HOW THEY MAY PREVAIL AGAINST SATAN AND HIS WICKED ARMY IN THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO HOW THEY MAY LIVE BEFORE GOD WITH A QUIET AND JOYFUL CONSCIENCE. NEWLY SET FORTH UNTO THE GREAT COMFORT OF THE GODLY READERS, BY THOMAS BECON.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.—Matt. xxvi.

Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith.—1 Peter v.

To the right honourable sir Francis Russell, knight, lord Russell, Thomas Becon wisheth the favour of God, continual health, and prosperous felicity.

If I had not by daily experience these few years past proved, yea, and that within mine own breast, right honourable lord, what disquietness, trouble, fear, and anguish, the remembrance of sin, conjoined with the contemplation and steadfast beholding of the righteous and terrible judgments of God, set forth in the Holy Scriptures against all ungodly and wicked persons, bringeth to weak and troubled consciences; I think verily, that no man living, although very excellent in persuading and moving affections, could have brought me to believe that so great a hell lurked, or rather lay buried, in the breast of any mortal man, although overwhelmed ever so much with the bottomless seas of sin, and estranged from all kinds of virtue and godliness. I have in times past heard by the relation of certain credible persons, how greatly divers godly and virtuous men have been troubled in their consciences by the consideration of their former life; which has appeared to them so horrible and sinful, that they have not only cursed the day of their birth, as we read of Job and Jeremiah, but also have been at the point of falling into desperation, and at utter defiance with God; accounting him not as a Father of mercy and God of all

consolation, but rather as a terrible Judge and fierce Lord; who, according to his righteousness, will punish, smite, slay, and condemn without mercy, all those that transgress his commandment, will, and pleasure.

And I myself a few years before, knew certain men of an honest conversation, and approved judgment, of whom some are yet living, and worthy and valiant champions in the court of the Most High, who were so turmoiled and tossed with the raging and cruel waves of desperation, that scarcely there remained any hope of salvation in their breasts; so terrible and loathsome was the appearance of their life to the eyes of their minds, and such fear conceived they of the righteous judgments of God. I have also read in the Holy Scriptures of God, and in authentic histories, of divers holy men who have been grievously vexed and turmoiled in their consciences, and almost ready to fall into the bottemless pit of desperation, if they had not been underset with the comfortable props of God's eternal mercy. But notwithstanding these things, if I had not proved the very same thing in mine own breast, which I have both heard and known of others, I should have thought the temptations of so many godly men to be but trifles, and things of no weighty importance; such carnal security and fleshly quietness concerning any grief of conscience reigns in the heart of natural man; which, as Jeremiah saith, (Jer. xvii.) is both wicked, and so stuffed with the filth of sin, that the bottom of it cannot be searched but by him alone who trieth the hearts and reins.

If such trouble, anguish, disquietness, grief, and turmoiling be in the hearts of them who earnestly profess Christ, cleave unto God's mercy with strong faith, hang wholly on his most sweet promises made to us plenteously in Christ's dear blood; and repent their wicked manners, mortify their carnal lusts, walk in a new life, and so appoint their conversation, that in all their life they seem to seek nothing but the glory of God, and the profit of their neighbour; what is to be thought of the false Christians who, professing Christ only in name, are very antichrists in their deeds, painted sepulchres full of all abomination and wickedness, glistering hypocrites, outwardly before men righteous, but inwardly before God full of hypocrisy, feigned holiness, dissimulation, and unrighteousness? Oh what a hell-like fire boils in their breasts; how are they disquieted, troubled, tormented, grieved, and turmoiled!

the sorrows and pains of their hearts are unspeakable; the trouble of their consciences is nothing inferior to the raging sea. So that it is truly said by the prophet, (Isa. lvii.) The wicked are like the raging sea that cannot rest, whose water foameth with mire and gravel. The wicked have no peace, saith the Lord God. What marvel, seeing they find nothing in their breasts but sin, damnation, death, hell, desperation, and the devil and all! What quietness can there be where nothing is felt but the high indignation, hot wrath, heavy displeasure, and the sharp vengeance of God? If it be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who hateth all works of ungodliness, and threateneth eternal damnation to the transgressors of his law, yea, who condemns without mercy them that willingly tread under foot Christ his dearly beloved Son, and count the blood of the testament wherewith the faithful are sanctified as an unholy thing, and do dishonour to the Spirit of grace, (Heb. x.)—what quietness can such unfaithful and wicked people have in their hearts, seeing that God, his angels, and all his blessed saints, are enemies to them? If God condemns, who is able to save? If God casts down to hell, who is able to lift up unto heaven? If God be an enemy, who can be a friend? Truly the wicked have against them, whatsoever and whosoever is of God; not only good men, heavenly spirits, and glorious saints, but also all creation.

In this sharp agony and great disquietness of mind, I may let the wicked pass, which as they know not God aright, so likewise they never flee unto the throne of his gracious mercy, but continue unto the last day in the raging sea of troublous tempests, and after this life, suffer much greater pains and torments. But, how shall the penitent sinner quiet his conscience, establish his mind, comfort his spirit, strengthen his faith, recover his valiance* in Christ Jesus, that he may be able to resist the fiery darts of Satan in the day of temptation? (1 Peter v.) What shall he do? whither shall he turn him, that he may be free from the dangers of so cruel an enemy, who sleeps not, who gives no days of respite, who by no means will be reconciled, entreated, or pacified; but, like a raging lion, continually goeth about seeking whom he may devour? He feared not to tempt many holy men in times past, yea, he feared not Christ Jesus, that most puissant Lord, but

* Courage.

sought all means possible to allure him unto his most wicked will through his subtle suggestions; and is it to be thought that he will fear to assail us poor wretched sinners, who, if we be not strengthened by the Spirit of God, are ready to fall at every hour? Oh how ready is he at all times, namely, in the time of adversity, trouble, and sickness, yea, most especially at the hour of death, when our memory fails, our understanding decays, our bodies are weak, our senses wax dull, our heart faints, our tongue fails, and whatsoever we have ceases to do the right office. How ready is he then to vex, trouble, disquiet, turmoil us; to lay before the eyes of our mind our sinful living, our wicked manners, our ungodly conversation, the breaking of God's precepts, the heavy displeasure of God against the wicked, the intolerable pains and exceeding torments of hell-fire, the eternal death and everlasting damnation, all which are prepared for the unfaithful! What mortal man, being in the heavy and sharp agony of death, will not tremble at these things, and be ready to fall into desperation at contemplating and beholding so terrible a sight, if against so strong temptations he be not fortressed with the Spirit of God, and richly armed with the Holy Scriptures?

The common people have a saying among them, that every man before he dies, shall see the devil! What is meant by this? Verily nothing else, but that Satan in the extreme agony and bitter pains of death, will put man in remembrance of his most sinful and damnable living, accuse him of unrighteousness, reprove him of abominable wickedness, lay to his charge that he has ever been and still is, an outrageous sinner, an open malefactor, a shameless transgressor of God's most holy law, and prove him worthy of eternal damnation, by the righteous judgment of God, and justly to be committed to hell-fire for evermore. Therefore shall Satan say to the sinner, Despair, die, and be damned. To consider these things in the heart, to see these things present with the eyes of the mind, wherein is nothing but wrath, displeasure, and damnation, what else is it than to see the devil, and to feel the pains of hell? Now is man brought unto the brink of hell-pit, and sees in himself nothing but sin, death, and damnation. Again, when Satan is labouring to the utmost of his power not only to lay things of most high wickedness to his charge, but also is ready to accuse him before the righteous throne of the divine Majesty, in whose sight not even the stars are pure

and clean; what shall he now do? Whither shall he turn him, to whom shall he flee, how shall he escape the devouring teeth of this most greedy and grievous wolf? Here are dangers, more dangerous than can be expressed; how shall they be avoided? Here is salvation either gotten or lost; how shall it be gotten? Oh! blessed is the man who getteth the victory over Satan in this most perilous conflict. If Satan be now overcome, he is driven to utter confusion, the infernal army is scattered abroad, hell power is vanquished; the miserable afflicted Christian is preserved, brought into the haven of quietness, carried unto eternal glory; the angels rejoice, and all the blessed saints and holy company of heaven are glad; God is glorified, praised, and magnified.

How this victory over Satan and his soldiers may be gotten, is declared in the following dialogue, wherein the godly reader shall see how Satan labours to bring the Christian Knight unto desperation; again how the Christian Knight defends himself against his enemy the devil, and valiantly puts him to flight. It contains, without doubt, much godly and spiritual doctrine, as they may easily see who read and mark it diligently. For whatsoever Satan can object against man, is here confuted by the word of God, and the sinner is thereby set in safe estate. So that in this little treatise, true knowledge may easily be gotten, both how to repel Satan and his cruel darts, and also how to obtain a joyful and quiet conscience before God in this life, which of all treasures is the most precious.

After I had finished this little treatise, your lordship came first unto my remembrance as one right worthy, to whom I might dedicate my travail in this behalf. For to whom should I offer this Christian Knight but to such a one as is, both in word and work, a true Christian and godly knight, yea, and a lord, not only in name and dignity, but also in virtue and godliness. Your lordship's hearty good will and unfeigned favour, both toward the setting forth of the glorious gospel of our Saviour Christ, and also the promoting of the true professors and faithful preachers of the same, is more known than needs here be rehearsed. The works of love and tender compassion which your lordship also continually brings forth, unto the great comfort of Christ's poor members, are not without a cause in these our days, reported and remembered by very many, unto the glory of God, the immortality of

your name, and the godly example of others. These, right honourable lord, are the works of true nobility. And where these works are wanting, though the parentage be ever so ancient, famous, and honourable in the judgment of the worldlings, yet is there not there the true nobility which especially consists in the true knowledge, faith, love, and fear of God; in favouring and following his blessed word; in loving and living the holy gospel of Christ; in well wishing and doing good to all men; in innocency of life; in bridling carnal affections; in mortifying the old Adam, and in putting on the new man, which after God is shapen in righteousness and true holiness. These virtues, whereof springs the true nobility, freely shine forth in your lordship's daily behaviour. And I doubt not but that God who hath begun this good work in you, will also finish the same in you, unto the glory and praise of his blessed name, and to the full reward of your faith which you have in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I therefore, considering these notable gifts wherewith God has richly endued you, thought it not unfitting to give unto your lordship this little treatise, as a testimony of my serviceable heart and ready good will towards your lordship; most humbly beseeching you, according to your accustomed gentleness, to take in good part this my bold enterprise. And I shall continually pray unto the Lord my God, whose blessed word you most entirely both favour and follow, to preserve your right honourable lordship in continual health, increase of honour, and prosperous felicity, unto the advancement of his glory, and the comfort of his holy congregation. Amen.*

* Sir Francis Russell, lord Russell, and afterwards earl of Bedford, was a sincere professor of the Protestant faith. He was among the first who were imprisoned on the accession of queen Mary, and was detained in custody a considerable time. He adhered to the true religion, and many letters were sent to comfort and establish him. Two written by Bradford, and one by Lever, are printed among the writings of those Reformers in the present collection. Cranmer also wrote to Cecil, urging him if possible to procure his early release, which he appears shortly after to have obtained, but perhaps not without some outward conformity, as he attended the Romish ceremonial used at his father's funeral in 1554. He was active in promoting the Reformation in the reign of queen Elizabeth.

THE DIALEGUE BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN KNIGHT* AND SATAN, WHEREIN SATAN MOVETH UNTO DESPERATION; THE KNIGHT COMFORTETH HIMSELF WITH THE SWEET PROMISES OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Satan. Wherefore goest thou so oft unto the church? Why hearest thou so many holy sermons? For what cause prayest thou so fervently? In all these things thou labourest in vain, for God heareth no sinners.

Christian Knight. God hath commanded me to hear the gospel, to believe, and to pray, and therefore I pray, and go unto the church, and believe that God is merciful unto me for Christ's sake; (Psalm v. lx; John ix.) and I trust that I shall have everlasting life, which God promises to so many as profess Christ, and truly believe on him. (John iii.) And Saint Paul saith, that the labour which we take in the Lord is not vain nor unprofitable. (1 Cor. xv.) And as concerning this saying, that God heareth not sinners, it ought to be understood of such sinners as do not repent: that God doth not hear their prayers; for their prayers are no prayers, seeing that they have not the true faith. Rom. xiv.

Satan. Thou pratest nothing to the purpose. Make God's ears deaf with thy prayers so long as thou wilt, yet canst thou never be thoroughly persuaded and truly believe that thou art heard, and shalt be saved, for the righteous only shall be saved. He that fulfils not God's commandments is a sinner, and unrighteous before God. And God saith, by his apostle, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It is therefore in vain that thou prayest; all the labour and pain that thou takest is of none effect, seeing thou art not righteous, nor satisfiest the law of God, wherefore there remains no hope of God's favour toward thee. Thou must needs despair, for here is no refuge, no succour, thou hast no place whither to stay; there is nothing that thou canst either lapt for thyself, or wherewith thou mayest rid thyself out of my hands, for thou art wholly in my power, and altogether mine, seeing thou art unrighteous. Assay what thou wilt, and what thou art able, and yet there remains for thee no help or succour.

Knight. The God of all mercy forbid this; thou hast no prey here for to hunt. I am far otherwise taught, and I know right well that the matter is much otherwise than thou babblest.

Satan. I care not what thou knowest, or what thou dreamest that thou knowest; hast thou not heard what I have said? Thou art utterly undone, there is no cause why thou mayest look and trust for

* Soldier or warrior, 1 Tim. i. 18; vi. 12; Eph. vi.

† Wrap up.

health and salvation, and that will I prove with open scripture. Did not God himself say unto a certain Jew, being a lawyer, Do this, and thou shalt live. (Luke x.) He means the ten commandments, for he speaks of the love of God and of thy neighbour, which, in the ten commandments is required most pure and most perfect. Now thou canst not deny that thy God requires of thee here the fulfilling of all his precepts, if thou desirest to live with him for ever. As he saith in the gospel of Matthew, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (Matt. xix.) Out of the which words of thy God, it necessarily follows, that he who keeps not the commandments, shall not have everlasting life, but shall die for ever, and be eternally damned. Hear, therefore, how evil the matter goes with thee, and in how great danger thou art. I will set this matter before thee plainly, in the form of a syllogism, that thou mayest perceive it the better. He that fulfils not perfectly the ten commandments, cannot enter into life, but must die the everlasting death. These are the words of thy God, which follow of the words that he answered the scribe, by an argument of the contrary. Luke x.

Thou hast not perfectly kept the commandments of God, thou art not righteous, thou hast transgressed God's precepts.

Therefore, it follows necessarily, that thou shalt not live with Christ, but that thou shalt be damned for ever.

What art thou able to answer to these things, being so strong, and unable to be confuted? Thou art taken, and so haltered on every part that thou canst not escape!

Knight. The argument thou hast proposed, no Jew, no heathen, and no unfaithful man is able to put away. But a true Christian man can answer thee quickly, neither is he snarled with this thy reasoning, as thou boastest.

Satan. I desire very greatly to hear what thou canst answer. Certainly the two first propositions, or premises, are true, therefore the conclusion must needs be true; for from true premises a true conclusion must follow. How then canst thou escape? Thou must needs despair, for there is no help or succour.

Knight. In this I can easily set myself at liberty, and despatch thy argument. For thou dost not dispute with a Jew or with an unfaithful person, for I have both a faith and a hope in God, although I feel as yet ever so much weakness; but with a Christian man who cannot be snarled with such arguments. I answer therefore unto thy argument in this manner. As concerning the first proposition, which is, that he cannot enjoy everlasting life, who keeps not the commandments of God, I grant and deny not but that it is true; for it follows from the words of Christ, my God and Redeemer. But the second proposition, which is, that I fulfil not the commandments of God, that I am not righteous, by no means do I grant, but plainly affirm that it is false.

Satan. What needeth the second proposition much probation? Ask thy conscience; even that accuses thee, and evidently shews that thou

art a sinner, and hast not kept the precepts of God. Daily also dost thou confess the same in the Lord's prayer, when thou sayest, Forgive us our debts or trespasses. And in the epistle of John, it is read, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; these are the words of thy God, for the Spirit of thy God spake them by his apostles, neither do they lie unto thee, but these things are full true that they spake. But thou liest when thou sayest that thou art righteous; that thou hast kept the commandments of God; that thou hast no sin: yea, besides all this, thou art a hypocrite also, and dost trust in thyself as though thou wast righteous; so that thou art thereby both the greater and also the more grievous sinner, as thy God teaches thee in the example of the pharisee, the hypocrite. (Luke xviii.) Therefore thou canst not escape out of my hands, thou must needs be mine. For I have proved that thou hast not kept the commandments of God, and that therefore thou art not righteous. I have proved this also out of the word of thy God, and the witness of thine own heart; of the prayer and the confession of thine own mouth. Why then dost thou cease to yield thyself unto me? Despair straightway. No cause hast thou to look for salvation; for the word of God cannot lie.

Knight. Thou art no changeling, O Satan, and this thy lying is thine old trade and accustomed property. It is no novelty unto thee; thou art a liar, and the father of lying from the beginning, yea, speaking the truth thou liest also. For if perchance at any time thou allegest any truth out of the Scriptures, yet according to thine old custom, and malicious, crafty, and false quarrelling, either thou dost not speak altogether the whole truth, or the things that thou allegest hang not together. For some things thou rehearsest, some things again subtlely thou dost omit, and wholly leave out, or else thou corruptest or depravest the Scripture.

Satan. How canst thou justly say this? With what face dost thou accuse me of calumniating or depraving the Scriptures? Have I not word for word recited the words of Scripture, even as they are read in the Bible, not leaving out any part, nor yet changing the least tittle? Thou shalt not, therefore, escape in this manner.

Knight. I deservedly accuse thee of calumniating and depraving the Scripture, and of not reciting the same purely and wholly. For where my God has spoken and taught these things that do agree and ought to be joined together, these thou dost partly allege, and partly omit or leave out. Thou dost allege, and most earnestly set forward that which makes for thee, and serves thy turn to destroy men; but the other part thou castest behind, and wholly leavest out, as though it pertained nothing to the matter. Is not this to calumniate and deprave the Scriptures? Thou layest many things against me concerning the law, because I have not fulfilled it; but of the gospel thou makest no mention at all,

as though that pertained nothing unto me. God hath not only given a law, but also a gospel. If thou, therefore, wilt recite his word, purely and not corruptly, use that manner and order that the Scripture uses. For that first of all sets forth unto us the law, whereof we may learn our sins, and the damnation that we have deserved. But it does not only set forth the law unto us, it sets forth and offers to us also the gospel, which teaches us how we are delivered from our sins, and that the faith which we have in Christ saves us. In the gospel therefore we find comfort and help, and thence we learn that the law cannot condemn us if we believe.

Satan. Thou speakest nothing to the purpose. Are not these the words of thy God, Do this, and thou shalt live? If thou, therefore, wilt enter into life, thou must needs keep the law. (Luke x.; Matt. xix.) For this, without all doubt, is very true, that God gave not his precepts that they should be despised, or that a man might stubbornly, and without punishment, break them; but that they should be kept. And although thy fellow Paul disputes and teaches many things of faith, yet he concludes and evidently declares that the law is not abrogated or put away by the faith of the gospel, but that through the same it is rather stablished, that it may be performed and fulfilled. (Rom. iii.) Thou knowest also that thy God, throughout the gospel, both teaches his law, and also requires the same to be done. Paul also saith, that upon them who do service unto unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, affliction and anguish, shall come. (Rom. ii.) Here thou hearest in the gospel, (if thou givest so much to the gospel, and wilt that any thing thence also be recited of me) here, I say, thou hearest from thence, that God wills his precepts should be kept, except thou wilt run into his indignation and displeasure. And Paul to the Thessalonians saith, God shall render vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel. All such shall be punished with everlasting damnation. And the gospel sufficiently bears witness in many places that no sinner can enter into the kingdom of heaven. Why then dost thou nourish a vain hope? Wherefore dost thou not despair? For doubtless thou art cast away for ever and ever.

Knight. As concerning these things which thou hitherto hast alleged out of the Old and New Testaments, and reasoned with me, all these things are the law, or else belong unto the law, thou shalt therefore have none advantage here, neither shalt thou win any thing thereby.

For I told thee before, that God has set forth to sinful man two things, one is the law, the other is the gospel. And I confess with all my heart that the law is the word of my God; and according to this former word, I mean the law, I do acknowledge and confess both frankly and with an open voice, neither will I deny it at any time, that I am a sinner, guilty of everlasting damnation. For this is very

true, that I, poor wreteh, have not fulfilled the law by mine own works and perfection. Wherefore, if there were none other way or mean here, in this world, to fulfil the law, than by mine own works, yea, and those perfeet and elean to the full, then must I needs grant thy seeond proposition; neither could I by any means eseape, but should be snarled and taken, I mean, perish for evermore. But I know, and also have, another manner of obtaining righteousness, and fulfilling the law, which thou canst not cast away from me. For God himself hath taught me this manner and way in the gospel; even that I should believe in Christ, who alone hath most perfectly fulfilled the law, and all obedienee for my sake. By this faith all my sins are forgiven me, and the Holy Ghost is given to me, who purifies my heart and begins to fulfil the law in me. If any thing be wanting in me, as we want many things in this sinful life, in many things we are ineonstant and impure, through the sinful flesh that we bear about, yet those sins or offences are not imputed or reckoned to us unto damnation, for the merits and fulfilling of Christ whieh is ours. For Christ is the fulfilling of the law for every one that believeth unto righteousness, yea, Christ is our righteousness. Psalm xxxii.; Rom. iv.; Rom. x.

Now hast thou heard these things. There is another word which God in like manner has set forth to me, and he will that I believe this no less than the first. This second word is called evangelion, or gospel, that is to say, grace, favour, and remission of sins promised in Christ. Thou understandest the gospel only after the letter, the very words of the gospel, but thou dost not believe the gospel, therefore shalt thou be damned, and not I. If I should bring forth to thee the absolution wherewith God himself did absolve me from all my sins that I ever eommitted against his law, wouldest thou then also reprove and accuse me of sin? But thou canst not do so by any means, when the Judge doth absolve me and set me at liberty; then it lies not in thy power to condemn me. This know I for a certainty, therefore hear how I shall escape. My sin ought not to be imputed to me only, but to thee also, yea, and that most of all. For thou first of all didst infuse into our nature, being well made and pure, that hell-like poison of sin in Adam and Eve, whom after thou hadst deeeived through thy lying, thou didst throw them headlong into sin and death. Hereof comes it that we all are born sinners from the time of Adam; hereof comes it that thou hast so much

power and rule over mankind; hereof comes it that our nature is miserably corrupt, depraved, perverse, and froward, so that even from our mother's womb, we are evil and wicked, blind in understanding, froward in will. (Eph. ii.; Rom. v.; John iii.) As Moses testifieth in Genesis, where he calleth us flesh, that is, men altogether carnal, fleshly, and void of God's Spirit. In like manner are we described in Jeremiah (xvii.), where the heart of man is called wicked and froward; yea, our daily experience teaches us what we have received of thee, through our first parents; verily none other thing than a horrible depravity and corruption of our nature, sin, and death; and that we are the enemies of God, as Paul testifies. (Rom. v.) They that are carnal, or fleshly-minded, savour those things that pertain unto the flesh: the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not obedient to the law of God, neither can it be so. They that are in the flesh cannot please God.

To thee do we owe this our fault and wretchedness, thou art guilty of this evil, thou art the author to us of this misery, thou, through thy guile, deceit, and lying, hast brought us into this sea of wretched troubles, which are thine own crafts and subtleties. For thou canst do nothing but deceive, lie, hurt, and destroy. This our wretchedness we learn to know by the law. But the Scripture ministers to us also exceeding great comfort, even true redemption; how we are purged and made clean from our sins, how our nature is made whole, how we may be delivered from death, and despatched out of thy power. For our faithful God, when he saw this fault, and that we could not help ourselves, nor set ourselves at liberty from these evils, and that our nature was so wholly corrupt, that we neither understood nor knew the will of God, nor yet accomplished the same from the very heart; yea, that rather, to the utmost of our power, we fought with the will of God—he, having pity on us, promised and sent unto us a true deliverer and valiant defender from all evils, who is able, and also will strongly and mightily defend us. This is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the lineage of Abraham, and of David, of Mary the virgin, without sin, as God, from the beginning, had promised by his prophets. And when the time was fulfilled, he sent him also to become man, and that for this cause chiefly, that he might save sinners, of whom I am not the least. (Rom. i.; Gal. iii.; 1 Tim. i.) This our Lord and Saviour speaks with us much more lovingly, familiarly, and gently,

than Moses, his servant, spake before in the law. Moses required a high, true, and perfect righteousness, and all who want that absolute righteousness he threatened to condemn. But he found that perfect righteousness in no man born of the will of man, but he proved all to be sinners: yet could he not deliver them by the doctrine of the law from their sins; but could only command those things that ought to be done, and forbid those things that are not to be done, and curse and condemn sinners. But Christ Jesus our Redeemer comforts us, and blesses us with his gospel, and delivers us from sin and death; yea, in his gospel he absolves us from sin, and plainly affirms and accounts us righteous.

Furthermore, thou dost affright me with the words of St. John, saying that we are all sinners, but thou keepest in silence, and of a set purpose passest over, the absolution which is annexed in the very same place, where he saith, If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous that he will forgive us our sins, and make us clean from all unrighteousness. (1 John i.) Affright me, therefore, by laying the law against me as long as thou wilt, I will fly unto the gospel, wherein I find sure comfort, and a way how I may escape out of thy hands. For although Moses saith unto me in the law, Thou art cursed, because thou hast transgressed and broken the commandments of God; yet will I not despair for all that, but will flee unto Christ, who saith unto me in the gospel, Son, be of good comfort, believe, thy sins are forgiven thee. I myself have borne away thy sins in mine own body upon the tree of the cross, yea, I have offered such a sacrifice, that I have made full satisfaction for them, and by this means reconciled thee to my Father. I have overcome death and Satan for thy sake. I have also perfectly fulfilled the law for thee. All these things that I have done are thine, if thou believest in me. Matt. ix.; Isaiah liii.; Eph. v.; Hosea xiii.; Heb. ii.; Rom. x.

Hearest thou, Satan, what Christ saith? Thou layest Moses against me; I again object Christ against thee. Thou allegest the servant, but I bring forth the Lord himself. The servant accuses me of malice and unrighteousness, and will judge me to death; but the Lord himself defends and sets me at liberty, and gives me life of his own free will. I therefore set nothing by thine accusations, they cannot hurt me; thou mayest indeed lay my sins against me, but I again object and lay against thee infinite merits, even the satisfaction, the fulfilling of the law, the obedience, the death,

and the resurrection of Christ, my Redeemer. This now is my treasure; Christ's righteousness is my righteousness, yea, Christ himself is mine innocency and righteousness. If thou, therefore, canst accuse Christ of no sin, if thou canst not condemn him, neither canst thou have any power against me to condemn me, and that for Christ, who hath both fully put away, and also forgiven me all my sins.

Satan. I neither can accuse nor condemn Christ of any sin; for he is righteous, I confess. But sinners are damned, and thou thyself hast confessed that thou art a sinner.

Knight. In myself I am a sinner, but in Christ, my righteous Maker, I am righteous. For he hath forgiven me all my sins, and hath taken me into his grace, favour, and tuition. He is always ready to help me; he forgiveth me the remnants of my sins, and purgeth them in me daily, till he maketh me altogether new. Wherefore, go thy way unto the heathen that know not God, and to the Jews who forsake Christ, their Lord; on me thou hast no more power. For God, my heavenly Father, hath delivered me from the power of darkness, and hath carried me into the kingdom of his well-beloved Son, in whom I have redemption by his blood, even remission of my sins. (Coloss. i.) Behold, therefore, that thy accusation which thou attemptest against me, cannot have place in me. For although I fulfil not the commandments of God in the law with mine own works, yet I fulfil them in the gospel with the most perfect works, and the satisfaction of Christ, in whom I believe. This faith is reckoned to me unto righteousness, although my works of themselves be imperfect. And this is the only and true manner of fulfilling the law of God, that I believe in Christ, the only fulfiller of the law and justifier, without whom the law can never be fulfilled, neither any man come unto God. All these things can I prove by the word of God. The teacher of the Gentiles, in his epistle to the Romans, saith, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of life in Christ Jesus hath delivered me from the law of sin and death. For that which was impossible to the law, forasmuch as it was weak because of the flesh, that God performed, and sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness which is required of the law might be fulfilled in us. (Rom. viii.) Herein do I hear other words, and another manner of justifying than thou bringest to me out of the law.

Thou dost object against me that I have sins. I grant that, in the law. But as thou dost thereof conclude. Therefore art thou damned, the Holy Ghost denieth it plainly. For though I have sin in mine own person ever so much, which is subject to damnation in me, yet can it not condemn me. Why so? Because I am in Christ through faith, so that Christ and I are now one spirit, we are now one body. (1 Cor. vi.) For he is my Head, and I am his member, of his flesh, and of his bones; (Eph. v.) and therefore was he of his own free will subject to the law, or became under the law, that he should redeem me from the accusation of the law; and he was made accursed for me, that he might deliver me from the curse of the law. (Gal. iii.) With this do I comfort me; I have sins indeed, but yet for Christ's sake, in whom I believe, there is no condemnation for me. Why then dost thou accuse me? For the law of the Spirit, that is, the rule and governance of the Holy Ghost in me, or the faith in Christ, delivers me from the law of sin and death, that sin can never condemn, nor death swallow me up. (Rom. viii.) Verily, the law is good and holy, but it can justify no man. It cannot change our stony heart, or give us a softer heart, or purify our sinful nature and renew it, or take away sins; this the Spirit of Christ alone can do. The nature and flesh of man is corrupt and bound to sin, having no strength of itself to accomplish the law of God, neither is it willing thereunto, but only prone and fully bent to sin. Notwithstanding, in this behalf God helpeth our weak nature that it may come unto the fulfilling of the law; and he sent his Son that he might be born very man, even such as we are, sin alone excepted. (Heb. iv.) Of a pure virgin was it proper for him to be born, that he might be made a sacrifice of a pure and everlasting price for sin. For the cause why God became man was this—that he might condemn, purge, and put away our sins, in his clean and innocent flesh, by the true sacrifice for sin, that is to say, by himself, and deserve remission of sins for us; that so, by this most holy and most innocent and perfectly clean sacrifice of the Son of God, both God and man, what the law required might be fulfilled. For by this sacrifice for sin, offered for us, on the cross, first of all he deserved for us remission of sins, and the Holy Ghost who gives faith and charity; and those being once received, our righteousness and the fulfilling of God's commandments are

begun in us; and although in this life we are not yet fully clean and perfect, and through the remnants of sins and maliciousness, we never perfectly fulfil the precepts of God, yet nevertheless we receive true righteousness before God, and all things that the law requires for us; I mean, righteousness which is of value before God, through faith in Christ. For he that believes in Christ is righteous before God. This sentence is the evangelion, that is to say, our glad and joyful tidings, our gospel, and that absolution which God himself pronounces, and to which all the angels in heaven and the whole church say, Amen. So be it.

He, therefore, that through faith hath Christ in his heart, hath also the fulfilling of God's precepts, which Christ himself performed in his own person; and Christ is so become the righteousness of this faithful Christian, that this faithful Christian, for Christ's sake, is reputed righteous before God, as though he had perfectly fulfilled the law.

Satan. Thy friend Paul, in that place which thou allegest, (Rom. viii.) adds something which thou leavest out, but I have noted and marked it diligently. He saith, They that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. God gave this promise or glad tidings, not to all manner of men generally, but to them only which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. But thou walkest after the flesh. For thou art covetous, proud, lecherous, and of a spiteful stomach, ready unto anger, intemperate, and altogether given to pleasures; what wilt thou answer me here? How wilt thou escape in this respect?

Knight. I confessed before, that in myself I am still a sinner, but this is not to walk after the flesh. For to walk after the flesh is, without all fear, stubbornly, proudly, and malapertly,* to fulfil the lusts and desires of the flesh, and all that our sinful nature doth desire, and of itself is bent unto. Again, with high will of the mind, and cheerfulness, to sin without repentance, and never to lament or to be sorry for the sin committed; yea, to delight also in sinning, and with a certain pleasure of the mind to fulfil the desire of the flesh.

I fall indeed into sin, but yet after the inward man I hate sin, which boileth in the flesh, and I desire nothing more than to be clean and utterly delivered from sin; and I am sorry, even from the very heart, that I have sinned and do sin against God. I pray God also daily, that he will increase my faith, that I may, as it were with a bridle, restrain the flesh, which is so prone and ready unto

* Impudently.

sin. And although I am wonderfully weak, yet for that mine imbecility and weakness, I am at utter defiance with myself, and I am sorry that so great infirmity reigns in me; yet do I not therefore despair; but I put all my trust in Christ, doubting nothing at all but that he will forgive me my trespasses, and increase my faith daily more and more, that I may inhibit, knock down, quench, oppress, crucify, and kill, the works of the flesh. Surely Isaiah wrote of Him not without a cause, that he should not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. (Isa. xlii.) I cannot of mine own natural strength, without the Spirit of God, hate sin and resist it, seeing that even together with nature it is born into the world with me. He that hates sin hath the Spirit of Christ, yea, he is Christ's, and not thine. St. Paul, therefore, confesses that in all godly persons, the remnants of sin do remain, against which the Spirit strives. But he adds words full of high consolation, even that for all this there is no damnation to them. And this privilege and prerogative have they in Christ, that righteous one, in whom they are engrafted through faith, and whose merits they do enjoy, and by them are saved from their sins. Rom. viii.

Satan. Thou hast not yet escaped, neither dost thou row in the haven, or art free from all jeopardy, as thou persuadest thyself, or dreamest. For it is written, He that continueth unto the end, he shall be saved. Many have fallen into my nets, who, notwithstanding, have with as bold courage as thou dost now, set themselves against me in disputation, and would by no means consent unto me; at first they were very hot, but they could not continue in their purpose, so that at the last, falling back, they came into my hands. The very same thing shall befall thee. After thou hast striven against me much, and for a long time, yet at the last shall I overcome thee, and enjoy mine old possession.

Knight. The God of all mercy forbid. I know in very deed that we cannot stand, but must needs fall and decay, if God does not give us faith and confirm the same, yea, and to help us in temptation, that through his grace we may persevere. For to persevere or continue in goodness, is no less the gift and work of God in us, than when we begin to believe and amend our life. But God has commanded that we should ask of him perseverance, and constancy or steadfastness in goodness and faith; and he hath promised me in Christ, that he will both graciously hear me and also help me. In whom, in Christ, all the promises of God are yea and amen, (2 Cor. i.) that is to say, highly perfect and very true; wherefore, with the help of God, I will pray that

what he has mercifully begun in me, he may also finish in me, unto the glory of his holy name.

Here hast thou mine armour, darts, and sword. I am not able to resist thee with mine own strength and wisdom. But I can do all things through Christ Jesus, who hath overcome thee and delivered me from thee. Even he teaches, rules, governs, confirms, strengthens, and defends me by his Holy Spirit. Therefore seeing that God himself is on my side, who shall condemn me? Rom. viii.

Satan. If I cannot hinder thy health and salvation, yet will I so trounce, turmoil, make lean, and trouble thee, and throw thee into so many misfortunes and calamities, and handle and vex thee on such miserable and cruel sort unto the utmost of my power, that thou shalt be weary of thy life, and wish rather to die than to live.

Knight. Certainly, I know right well that thou art the author of all evils and mischances, and that thou dost labour and imagine in every place none other thing than to hurt good men and vex them. And I know that I, being a wretched vessel, cannot enjoy continual pleasures in this life, in this ungracious world, thy most perilous and bloody inn, but that I must be vexed divers ways; yet will I not despair and cast away all hope. For I have very plenteous comfort, and such as cannot be overcome, wherewith I may confirm and make strong my mind, which neither thou nor all the whole world can take away from me. Thou art but a creature, as thou knowest right well, neither canst thou work anything against me, nor do me more evil than my God suffers thee. But he suffers thee no more than is necessary to my salvation, and furtherance of godliness. To abound with all kinds of pleasures and commodities in this life is very dangerous here in this world; neither can the godly be in danger of greater misfortunes and perils here, than when all things befall them, in every condition, after their own heart's desire, when all things flow to them even as they would have it, when they abound with pleasures, and are heaped up with all the commodities of this life. For in so great wealth of living they forget both themselves and God their Father.

Misfortunes, afflictions, and perils, teach us, by the merciful will of God, to know ourselves, our infirmity, our weakness, our nothingness, our wretchedness; and to fear God, to trust in God, and earnestly to call on him, which when we do, God is at hand and assists us with his present help, and so we learn both to know God and ourselves. What great harm then canst thou do me, if God so providing

and suffering thee, thou causest me to have loss and wretchedness in these corruptible and transitory things, which are not my true heritage? My true inheritance is incorruptible, unable to be defiled, and an immortal and everlasting treasure in heaven. This treasure thou shalt not be so bold as once to handle, neither shalt thou at any time be able so to do. If thou killest my body, thou dost none other thing than bring me into the quietness of that true life that is to come; and he who gave me body and soul, and who redeemed me out of thy power, even he shall also keep both my body and soul unto the day of redemption, wherein he shall raise up my body out of the earth into everlasting life. In the mean season, my soul is kept well and safely with Christ. Thou therefore canst not hurt me; while my God keeps me constant and steadfast in the faith of Christ, I have his word and promise. These do not lie. We know, saith St. Paul, that all things work for the best unto them that love God. (Rom. viii.) And my Saviour Christ saith, I know my sheep, and I give them everlasting life, neither shall they perish for ever, nor yet shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (John x.) And in the ninety-first psalm it is written, He that dwelleth in the help of the Most High, he abideth in the defence of the God of heaven. He saith to the Lord, Thou art my upholder and my refuge; yea, thou art my God, in whom I trust. For he hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters, and from the sharp sword, or noisome pestilence. He hath given his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee in their hands that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone. He hath called unto me, and I will favourably hear him; I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him and bring him to honour.

Dost thou hear how God himself looks upon and defends his people, and sends his holy angels from heaven to defend them? As David writes, (Psalm xxxiv.) The angel of the Lord pitches his tent round about them that fear the Lord and delivers them. Here hast thou on whom I trust, and wherefore I set thee at defiance, and conceive a good hope. I do nothing at all rejoice in myself, or of myself; but in my almighty Lord and God, Jesus Christ, do I glory and rejoice, yea, and that not without a cause. For he hath loved me and hath given himself for me, to deliver me from death, and that I should live and triumph with him in his everlasting kingdom without end. (1 John

iv.) This is my comfort, and to this will I cleave by the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Now assay thou, and imagine against me all that God my heavenly Father, who is charity and goodness itself, doth suffer. That my Father will not leave me, his weak son, destitute and succourless in temptation. Christ will keep his poor weak sheep that it come not into the wolf's jaws. All the enemies of Christ and of the Christians shall be cast under our feet. This is as true as God is in heaven; wherefore Satan away, get thee hence from me. Thou hast no power on me, I pertain unto him, and am his for evermore, who bought me from thee with his precious blood, being undoubtedly a very great price, I mean my Lord Jesus Christ. He it is, and so will remain, who is a fiery wall unto me wheresoever I come. He it is that keeps me as the apple of his eye. To him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all glory and praise, world without end. Amen.

Satan. Thou speakest many things to rid thyself of me, but thou art not yet gone. Thou knowest that even from thy tender age thou wast always taught in the church that it is high presumption to look for salvation and everlasting life without good works. But thou dost openly confess, that thou hast not done nor doest any good works that thou art able to set against the judgment of God, or that can stand in God's judgment; yet such is thy foolish rashness and extreme madness, that without the fulfilling of the law, and the true good works, thou thinkest that thou shalt go up into heaven. What other thing is this than to make God most unrighteous? For that should be as though thou wouldest wallow thyself in a sink of all kinds of ungraciousness, and desire of God that he would approve, accept, and allow thy maliciousness, sinful wantonness, and thy wicked life, and that he should save thee, being so ungracious a fellow and so wicked a sinner. But this—know it for a truth—shall never come to pass. If thou dost think and hope that it will come to pass, thou thinkest in vain, and nourishest a vain hope.

Thou couldest allow (so far as I hear) that thou shouldest get the greater portion of other men's goods, and another man should pay thy debts, and that thou shouldest commit many robberies, and another be hanged for thee. Thou wilt be a sinner, and live naughtily at thy own pleasure, and yet after this life, thou trustest to come unto heaven, but thou art wholly deceived and hopest in vain. Thou canst not go so easily and without any labour unto the stars, by this way canst thou not go up into heaven. God for his infinite righteousness cannot allow sin. If he would not have punished sin, for what use should he have made hell? Certainly he should have laid forth and threatened the pains of hell in vain to ungodly and wicked persons. Thou knowest, if thou wilt know, that the matter is far otherwise, and yet thou thinkest that thou shalt pay to God with vain words, those things that thou owest him, and by this means escape from his judgment, which all you Lutherans and fellows of

the new learning are wont to do, and wresting the Scriptures, ye expound them after the fancies of your own brain. Where the Scripture requires good works, there ye boast of your unfruitful and barren faith, and by that ye think that ye shall obtain all things. Ye reprove sophistry in others, but ye yourselves use it more than any other, yea, and that in a cause which of all is most weighty. Where ye might use words that should make unto the edification of the simple, there of a set purpose do ye use manners of speaking which have not been used nor accustomed, yea, and those very slanderous; as when ye say, Faith alone justifieth, what manner of speaking, I pray thee, could be more perilous and more full of slander? For what other thing can any rude and simple man hereof understand, than that it makes no matter how he lives? Ye being instructed with this vain faith, do at your own pleasure what ye will, and after your heart's lust live a pope's life, and yet nevertheless will ye be Christians, and be saved; but your hope is vain and shall deceive you. This thing shall ye prove to be true, and as I say in very deed.

Knight. O thou most lying spirit, thou hatest the truth, and canst not abide it, and because thou canst bring nothing against it, thou assayest me another way; and dost load and invade us with those same reproaches, contumelies, and spiteful slanders, which we are compelled daily to hear of thine apostles, men full of venomous poison, and most unshamefaced sycophants, and unjust accusers of innocents. But lest thou shouldest think that thou hast gotten the mastery, I will answer all thine objections.

And first, I confess with all my heart, that he is a very ungodly and naughty person who continues in a wicked life without repentance, and does not apply himself to good works, nor works any good thing, or can be content to suffer any thing for Christ's sake, and yet nevertheless boasts himself to be a Christian man, and hopes for salvation. This is to sin against the mercy of God, and verily that is an exceeding blindness and almost without hope of recovery, which neither perceives the peril and fiereeness of sin, nor the mercy of God and the passion of Christ, and only dreameth to look for salvation, when, notwithstanding it neither looks for it truly, nor yet knows God aright. For what hope of health can there be, where there is no repentance of a self-will, where there is no fear of God, no love, no confidence in God, nor any knowledge of God? Many and all kinds of good works are to be done, we must apply our minds diligently to the study of good works, yet may we not put hope of salvation in our works, but in Christ only. For works, be they ever so good, yet are they imperfect, and if God did not accept and approve them for Christ's sake, but judged and examined them according to

the rigour, hardness, severity, and sharpness of his law, they would be found very imperfect and sinful. He that gives not his mind to good works, he believes not God's word, and it is evident that he believes not in Christ, and that he loves not God, nor hopes and believes truly to have everlasting life. But although true faith be not without good works, and though a man work ever so much goodness, yet forasmuch as his flesh boils continually with evil thoughts and lusts, and fights against the Spirit, he fulfils not the law perfectly. We labour in this life in the exercise only of fulfilling the law, we only begin the law here, we do not fulfil it. Certainly the words of St. Paul unto Titus are plain and evident, where he saith, God saved us, not for our own works, but of his mercy; and he adds, By the fountain of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Therefore whatsoever is against the will of God, as evil works and all sin, a Christian man ought to abhor and eschew, and to work well. Neither may he remain in his old trade and living, but he must put off the old man with the works of darkness, and put out of him the old leaven; yet are we not accounted righteous before God for this newly begun and imperfect fulfilling of the law, but of mercy, for the deserving and merit of Christ, if we believe in Christ.

To the second objection I answer that all our works are not in all points conformable to the commandments of God, and that we are and remain sinners, but this prerogative have we, that by baptism,* we are removed from that fierce

* By regeneration—the sign being used for the thing signified. Becon elsewhere says, "Moses sanctified with visible and outward sacraments through his ministry; but the Lord doth sanctify with his invisible grace through the Holy Ghost, where is in very deed the whole fruit of the visible and outward sacraments. For without this sanctifying of the invisible grace what do the visible sacraments profit? A question may worthily be demanded; Whether this invisible sanctifying, without the visible sacraments wherewith man is visibly and outwardly sanctified, profits nothing? That truly were a great absurdity;—seeing that in this inward sanctifying the whole advantage and profit of them consists. But it may also diligently be considered whether it may truly be said that this sanctifying of the invisible grace cannot be without those visible sacraments? For verily the visible baptism did profit Simon Magus nothing at all, seeing he wanted the invisible sanctifying.—This likewise may be spoken of that thief to whom being crucified with the Lord, he said, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. For he was not endowed with so great felicity without the invisible sanctifying. Therefore we gather that some have had the invisible sanctifying without the visible sacraments, and that it hath profited them and done them

judging-place into the court of mercy or throne of grace, where God will not deal with us according to the rigour of justice, but according to his mercy. There is, therefore, sin enough, and alas for sorrow, too much, in our life, but all our sins are smothered and drowned in the wounds and blood of Jesus Christ, who hath borne them away and satisfied for them, as though they had been his own.

To the third, I answer, I shall not ascend into heaven without good works, and without the fulfilling of the law. For I know it is impossible, but I have the fulfilling of Christ through faith. That fulfilling of Christ, through faith, is mine and proper to me. And also through the grace that I have received, I give my mind to the exercise and study of good works, that I may go forward and be made perfect daily more and more. But when I am far from the perfect fulfilling, and seeing in many things I stumble and fall down; therefore do I believe in Christ, and call on the name of the Lord, and by this means do I receive remission of all my sins. And for my faith's sake in Christ, God accepts me for righteous, yea, and that for the Lord Christ, author of all righteousness, who hath most abundantly satisfied the law. For this benefit do I thank this my Lord Christ.

To the fourth objection, I answer, I confess that when I am greatly indebted, and so endangered that I am not of sufficient ability to satisfy the same, I can abide that another should pay for me and despatch my debt. What should a beggarly debtor and a miserable captive or prisoner desire

good.—Again, we gather that the visible sanctifying which is done by the visible sacraments, may be present, but yet that it cannot profit without this invisible sanctifying. And yet is not the visible sacrament therefore to be despised. For the despiser thereof can by no means be invisibly sanctified.

"Not all they that are of Israel, are Israelites; neither yet are all they that are washed with water, straightways also washed with the Holy Ghost; as contariwise, not all that are numbered among the learners, and have need to be instructed and taught before they are admitted into baptism, are strangers and without the Holy Ghost.

"As concerning the visible and outward ministry, they baptize both good and bad. But He baptizeth by them invisibly, to whom both the visible baptism and the invisible grace belong. Both the good, therefore, and the evil may baptize; but to wash the conscience, that can none do, but He alone who is always good.—To minister and dispose the word and sacrament the minister is somewhat; but to cleanse and to justify he is nothing. For none worketh this in the inward man, but He alone by whom the whole man was made."

These extracts are from Becon's tract, entitled "Certain Articles of the Christian Religion." Art. xiii.

more, than to be redeemed and set at liberty? Seeing then that the most mereiful God and my most favourable heavenly Father, hath appointed and promised me in Christ, this paying of my debt, this help and redemption without my deserving, yea, and that when I was his enemy and thy prisoner, even of his mere and gracious free mercy—why should I not most entirely desire, hope, and look for, that exeeeding mercy, and most neeessary help for me, when it is offered? Why should I not accept it and gladly receive it? What greater madness were there than if I should refuse it? In the payment of this my debt, or in this my redemption, God plainly and evidently declared and showed the unsearchable and exeeeding great riches of his fatherly affection, faith, and love towards us, and of the grace promised in Christ; in whom only he is truly known to be righteous, and a righteous Creator. In Christ also is his unoutspeakable goodness, merey, and tender love toward man espied and known, and therefore with hearty thanksgiving, his righteousness and goodness are highly advaneed and magnified. He is rich in mercy, rich toward all that eall on him. But I am miserable and needy; I have therefore need of his help. (Rom. x.) Graee is promised of him; I have need of grace. Why should not I then with joy and thanksgiving reeeive the grace offered? He loved the world so entirely, that he gave his only begotten Son for us, to deliver us from all sorrowful chanees and wretchedness; who also should be our Mediator, our satisfier or sacrifice offerer, and our merey-stoek; that every one which believeth in him, may not perish, but have everlasting life through him. (John iii. 1 Tim. ii. 1 John ii.) If it has so pleased my God, aeeording to his exeeeding merey, that his well-beloved Son should be made aeeursed for me, that I through him might be delivered from eurse and damnation, (John iii. Gal. iii.) surely I neither ought nor yet will refuse this high benefit; but seeing it is offered, I will embraee it with both mine arms, and give everlasting and eontinual thanks to him for so noble a benefit. And although great weakness reigns yet in me, notwithstanding, through the grace that I have received, I pray that not mine own ill will, but the good pleasure of God may be done in me; and I am sorry that I am not in all points pure and elean, and that I do not show that obedience in all things to the commandments of God to which I am bound. Neither do I doubt but that my Redeemer Christ,

through his Spirit and his blood, will make me clean and a new man, so that no evil nor uncleanness shall remain or tarry in me. For he has already begun to do that, and I know that his death, which brings salvation to us, and his mighty resurrection, shall not be unfruitful nor vain in me.

To the fifth, I answer, I know that God wills no wickedness, neither can he allow sin. For he is holy, and willeth that we also be holy. (Psal. v. Lev. xix.) Certainly he gave not his well-beloved Son unto the death for our sins, that we should remain in sin, but that we, being delivered and thoroughly made clean from sin, should, as the holy sons of God, serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. (Luke i.) For God gave not precepts in vain, neither hath he without a cause, or dallying, threatened those sinners that do not repent, both with temporal and everlasting pains.

In the sixth place, thou playest the right devil throughout, and according to thine old wont and fashion, even for the endless bitterness and envy of thy most malicious stomach, thou loadest us with most cruel rebukes and shameless lies, calling us Lutherans and new gospellers. Such thou canst not abide; for they teach the plenteous and exceeding rich grace of perfect redemption in Christ, whereby alone we are justified and saved; and this do they very strongly, steadfastly, and plainly, against thy damnable and most pestilent error brought in by the Pelagians, who trusted to their own works, and went about with their own works and strength in the flesh, to fulfil the law, to deserve grace, which notwithstanding was impossible, to obtain righteousness and salvation. And so did they deny Christ, and wholly buried him, and obscured all his glory and benefits toward us. And this canst thou suffer—thou canst have no greater pleasure done to thee. For with this doctrine thou fillest hell even full. But these words are not vain and of none effect, when a poor wretched sinner believes the gospel, confesses and acknowledges his sins with true repentance, and being sorry for them, labours to lead a better life, amends himself in those things wherein he has offended, and does not set his own imperfect works against the fierce judgment of God, but the infinite merits and works of Christ, and without presumption, places all his trust on the grace of God promised in Christ. And this all the true godly men have ever done.

In their greatest perils, in the extreme agony of death, they have even from the very heart acknowledged themselves to be, before God, wretches and sinners worthy of damnation. Neither have they trusted to their own merits, but have said with the psalmist, Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant, for no living creatures shall be justified in thy sight (Psal. cxliii.); and have removed their eyes very far from all their own merits, into the merits of Christ, having a respect only and continually, unto his death and resurrection. So did Bernard also, who although he had done many good works, and had exercised himself diligently in the obedience of God's precepts, yet when he should die, he trusted not to choose his own words, but called upon the tender mercy and favourable grace of God, saying, Lord, unthriftily have I lived, and unthriftily have I spent my time, but this one thing comforteth me, that thou dost not despise a contrite and a humbled heart. (Ps. xxxiv.) And Augustine saith, If thou wilt not be partaker of God's favour, then boast thy merits.

Unto the seventh and eighth objections, whereas thou saidst that we after our own fancy do expound the Holy Scripture and violently wrest it to establish our opinions, I answer, that thou, according to thine old poisonous pleasure of lying and picking quarrels, dost lie without all shame. With these venomous untruths dost thou go about to make all our labour to be suspected, which we spend in setting forth and teaching the doctrine of the gospel, and to hinder so that it bring forth no fruit; but those thy lies, be they ever so glistering and many, shall at the last be uttered and come to light. So that the truth shall have the victory and abide for ever. For it is evident that we teach not dead or unfruitful faith, but true, constant, and living faith in Christ, which worketh by love, and bringeth forth many fruits. (Gal. v.) Where the Scripture teaches good works, there do we also teach good works; yea, and that much more diligently, more prudently, and in a better order than the Pharisees and Sadducees, I mean the false hypocrites under the pope's kingdom do. For we first of all lay a sure foundation, which is faith; whereof come forth, and, as out of a fountain, issue all good works. When we have once laid this foundation, we teach all kinds of good works, and what are the offices and duties of all men, every man in his calling. For God justifies us through faith in Christ for this cause, that we being justified,

may live always righteously, and steadfastly defend and maintain innoceney of life. To this true faith in Christ, we give all those things that the Scripture attributes unto it.

This faith justifies us. Rom. iii. iv.

By this faith are we adopted and purchased into the family of God. Gal. ii. iii.

By this faith we receive remission of sins. John i.

This faith brings peace to the conscience. Gal. iii.

This faith receives everlasting life. Acts x.

This faith fulfils the law. (Rom. v.) For it layeth hand on the true and only doer or fulfiller of the law, and challengeth Him to be her own. (John iii.) It layeth hold also on the Spirit of Christ, with his gifts, without whom the law cannot be fulfilled or accomplished. Rom. viii.

This faith is the glorious and excellent work of God. John vi.

Without this faith no man can please God. Heb. xi.

This faith is the only mean or instrument, whereby even from the beginning of the world, all holy men were justified and made acceptable to God; whereby also they wrought very great and wonderful things; again whereby they laid hand on, and did receive the promise of God. Heb. xi.

This faith alone is righteousness before God, (Rom. iii.) yea, this alone obtains the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xvi.

This faith is the victory of the godly, wherewith they overcome the world. 1 John v.

This faith Christ very highly commends in the gospel history, where he saith, Thy faith hath saved thee, &c. Luke vii.

Here thou seest, O most lying spirit, that we teach no dead, vain, and unfruitful faith, but that very same faith which the prophets taught, which Christ so highly commended, which the apostles preached, and whereof St. Mark also saith, All things are possible to him that believeth. And even from the very beginning, the true church both did and believed, which thou canst not condemn, even as we now do and believe, both as concerning the fulfilling of the law, and of good works and faith. Neither do we wrest the Scriptures unto our fancies, nor do them any injury; but we understand and expound the Scriptures according to the right manner of faith, that the sentence may be godly, and as the true church understands and takes them. Augustine writing upon John, (Tra. iii. cap. i.), agrees with us, where he saith, All that are justified by Christ are right-

eous, not in themselves, but in Him. For in themselves, if thou dost ask what they are, they are Adam; in Him, if thou dost ask, they are Christ's. And again he saith, (1 Retr. xix.) According to the mind of the holy writings, all the commandments are counted done and perfectly fulfilled, when whatsoever is not done is forgiven. Thou seest that our justification in this life can be no personal perfection and full accomplishment of the commandments of God; but a free, merciful, forgiving of our disobedience, and an imputation or reckoning of righteousness for Christ's sake.

And Ambrose, (Ro. cap. iii.) saith, He fulfilleth the law, that believeth in Christ. Also Gregory saith, (Psal. iv.) Faith is righteousness, without which faith no man can be righteous. Again Jerome, (Zeph. cap. ii.) They shall seek righteousness, which is none other than Christ himself. This, without doubt, was at that time the faith of the true godly men, when they whom I have alleged were the chief doctors of the church. On this manner writeth Jerome upon Habakkuk, where he giveth all the glory of our justification unto Christ, saying, Christ is all my strength or virtue, Christ is all my righteousness, who is my God. Thus do we understand the Scripture as touching the justification of a sinner; even none otherwise than the holy church hath always understood and expounded it.

Unto the ninth objection, I answer, If in these articles our doctrine be sophistical, as thou falsely layest against us; then did the holy doctors of the church at that time use sophistry, or crafty dissembling with the Scriptures, whom in this point thou dost also condemn, seeing for the very same matter thou condemnest us. But thou dost falsely so accuse us, and when thou sayest that we use sophistry, thou liest full wickedly. When we will speak truly and rightly of the grace of God, justifying us in Christ, then neither can nor ought any man, to speak of it otherwise than St. Paul and others, the chief doctors of the church, have with one consent spoken of it. St. Paul, (Rom. iii.) testifies that the sinner is justified, not by works, but by faith, that is to say, by his trust and confidence, which he hath in the grace of God promised in Christ; and that is as though he should say, a sinner is only saved and justified by the grace and mercy of Christ, and not for the worthiness of his good deeds or of his own merit. This doctrine of Paul, the old doctors of the church did right well understand, and therefore wrote they, that faith alone

in Christ justifieth. For so speak Augustine, Ambrose, Hilary, Chrysostom, Origen, Theophylact, Didimus, Alexandrinus, with many others of the ancient doctors. And this manner of speaking of our justification was in times past so greatly used in the church, that the new or later doctors of the church have many times used the same, as Sedulius, Thomas Aquinas, Cricamus, Cardinalis, Bruno, Carthusianus, Nicholaus, Gorranus, and others.

Therefore, if this manner of speaking, whereby we say that faith alone justifieth, were so slanderous and full of offences as thou sayest, surely these ancient catholic doctors and bishops would not have used the same. But seeing that they taught and wrote so, unto the edifying and health of many men, why should not we also use the same? But this is the matter; thou canst not abide at all to hear of the free grace of God; neither is there any thing that more offends thee than when that is preached, therefore thou dost overwhelm us with picking quarrels and slanderous reports. Hereof came those thy lamentations; this it is that troubles and grieves thee. Truth it is, that if by this manner of speaking we would hinder the study of good works, we should not then so speak without grievous offence; yea, we should also teach very ungodlily, and be heretics indeed; but we so speak for very weighty and most necessary causes. For it is our duty above all things, and in every place, to keep unspotted the grace of God, which we have in Christ, and royally to extol and set it forth even unto the uttermost. And that is done very goodly and most aptly by this manner of speaking. Neither is this our mind when we use this manner of speaking, that faith ought to be or to remain in a man, alone or without fruit; but that it ought straightways to work by love, and all kinds of good works, unto the glory of God and the health of our neighbour. Therefore it is all one, whether we say, Faith justifies without works, as Paul saith, God saves us through his mercy, and not for our works, and as Peter saith, We believe to obtain health through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;—or if we say with the ancient catholic doctors, Faith alone justifieth or saveth. For we mean none other things by these words, than that our righteousness and everlasting salvation comes of the free and mere grace of God promised in Christ; that Christ hath deserved these so great benefits for us, and not we ourselves; that we can none otherwise than by faith lay

hand on the mercy of God, or on Christ. And this is the confession and faith of all the catholic church.

For we have always taught, and do teach, that the study of good works ought to be exercised with all strength; we also are very earnestly diligent to show how greatly we are bound to work well, and how large gifts the study for good works has; again, how grievous pain, affliction, and all kinds of plagues do follow an ungodly and wicked dissolute life. Here seest thou that we and our cause do not lean on a vain and false trifling faith, but on a true faith, and such as worketh by charity and all good works; this renews a man, so that with high diligence he goes about and covets to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Thou hast now my foundation whereunto I stick, and may safely so do. I grant thee, that the law hath deservedly made me bond to malediction and cursing, because I have not shown such obedience to the law as I ought; yet nevertheless I hope for salvation; for Christ my Redeemer hath delivered me from the curse of the law, when he became accursed on the cross for my sake, and gave and brought to me everlasting blessing; (Gal. iii.) so that now, through him, I have remission of all my sins and am righteous before God. For he is become my righteousness before God. (Isa. xxviii.) And the word of God saith unto me, that no man shall be confounded that believeth in Christ. To this do I cleave, and still will cleave most earnestly, even unto death itself. (Rom. ix.) I will lean on faith and hope, and I will fasten myself hard to this my Rock, Jesus Christ, against whom the very gates of hell shall not prevail. Matt. xvi.

Take these things for thine answer, which I know right well thou shalt never be able to confute. Get thee hence therefore from me, Satan. Where the Lord and my God Christ is and dwelleth, there shall I dwell also for evermore. May he vouchsafe to increase and keep my faith unto the glory and the praise of his blessed and glorious name. Amen.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

SELECTIONS

FROM

THE FLOWER OF GODLY PRAYERS,

VERY NECESSARY TO BE USED OF THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS IN THESE OUR DAYS, FOR THE SAFEGUARD, HEALTH, AND COMFORT OF ALL DEGREES AND ESTATES;

NEWLY MADE

BY THOMAS BECON.

A. D. 1550.

PRAY CONTINUALLY.—1 Thess. v.

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE.

Addressed to the Duchess of Somerset.

We now have God for our loving Father and merciful Saviour, let us take heed that we make him not of a friend an enemy. He hath now blessed us with all manner of spiritual blessing, let us take heed that his blessing be not turned into cursing. He hath now turned away our captivity, let us take heed that he throw us not again into our old thraldom. He hath enriched us now with many singular and noble benefits, let us take heed that they be not taken away from us for our unkindness, and plagues cast upon us in their stead. If we walk worthy of God's kindness, and of these his inestimable benefits, every man living in his vocation with all humbleness of mind, and meekness, and long suffering, forbearing one another, if we be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; if we be thankful to God for his benefits, and beneficial to

our poor Christian brethren and sisters; God will surely increase these his gifts in us, and enrich us with more benefits.—He will defend this realm, keep us harmless from all our enemies, and send us abundance of all things necessary for this present life, and after our departure from this vale of misery, will give us eternal glory. Contrariwise, if we will not walk worthy of God's kindness, but are unthankful for his benefits, undoubtedly God will take them away from us, and pour his plagues upon us.

What is to be done that we may continue in the favour of God, have him still for our most merciful Lord, and enjoy his benefits unto the end? Verily even that which all godly men have ever used to do, both in prosperity and adversity, I mean, to pray to the Lord our God with a penitent and faithful heart. For prayer, if it be rightly used, is of great value before God, and not only makes him our good and merciful Lord, but also easily obtains of him whatsoever we ask according to his will. The Holy Ghost, the knowledge of God's blessed word, necessaries for this present life, peace for realms, quietness for commonwealths, victory over enemies, having of children, health, long life, remission of sins, eternal glory, with all other good things pertaining either to the soul or to the body, faithful prayer obtains of God; as our Saviour Christ saith, Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, if ye believe, ye shall receive it. Forasmuch, therefore, as nothing is more necessary to be used of the true Christian, for the continuance of God's favour and of his heavenly blessings toward them, and for the avoiding of all plagues and displeasures, than prayer; forasmuch also as nothing does so much adorn, garnish, and set forth the goodly and prosperous state of a commonwealth, as every man diligently, faithfully, and quietly to live in his vocation and calling; I, not otherwise knowing how I may be able to do good to my country, but by praying, preaching, and writing, (for fortune goes forth frowardly to frown upon me,) have these few weeks past compiled and made a book of prayers, comprehending not only necessary and convenient prayers for all degrees of men, even from the highest to the lowest, but also for all other things necessary to be prayed for. So that if we will follow the order of charity, and do the will of God, who commands us to pray one for another; again, if we will pray to obtain virtue and to slay vice, this book shall minister to the godly, convenient

and suitable prayers. And because the prayers should be the more acceptable unto God, and sound the better in his godly ears—again, that the godly exercisers of prayer may pray with the more fruit, and be the better edified, I have laboured to the uttermost of my power to use in these prayers as few words of my own as I could, and to glean out of the fruitful field of the sacred Scriptures whatsoever I found suited for every prayer that I made, that when it is prayed, not man, but the Holy Ghost, may seem to speak.

After I had finished these prayers, most virtuous lady, your grace came first to my remembrance, as a worthy patron both of the godly, and of godliness, both of the learned, and of learning; to whom even of most bounden duty, I ought to offer this my labour. The gift I confess is small and slender, if it be compared with your grace's liberality, which your grace hath most bounteously showed unto me, since I came first to your service. Notwithstanding I am so fully persuaded of your grace's most gentle nature and godly disposition toward so many as are well bent and virtuously minded, that I fear nothing to offer this my book unto your grace, as a testimony of my serviceable heart, and ready good will towards your grace. It is a flower, I grant; notwithstanding, such a flower as, if it be rightly used, is of singular virtue and mighty in operation. No evil air can hurt where the savour of this flower comes. Yea, the devil, the world, and the flesh, cannot abide the air of this flower, so mighty is the spiritual operation thereof. This flower gives a smell in the streets to the souls of the faithful, as the cinnamon and balm that have so good a savour, yea, a sweet odour doth it give, as it were myrrh of the best. I therefore most humbly beseech your grace to take this my small gift in good part, which, coming as it were from your grace into the hands of many, shall, I doubt not, do many good, and be the occasion that vice shall decrease, and virtue abundantly increase among us. God, whose holy word your grace most fervently loves, and most earnestly practises in your daily conversation, vouchsafe to preserve your grace, with my lord's grace, your most loving husband, and all your godly and virtuous children, in continual health and daily increase of honour, unto the glory of his name, and the comfort of all us, your grace's most humble and faithful servants. Amen.

THE

FLOWER OF GODLY PRAYERS.*

A Prayer for the Morning.

O HEAVENLY Father, who like a diligent watchman attendest always upon thy faithful people, whether they wake or sleep, and mightily defendest them; not only from Satan, that old enemy of mankind, but also from all other their adversaries, so that through thy godly power they are preserved harmless—I most heartily thank thee that it hath pleased thy fatherly goodness so to take eare of me, thine unprofitable servant, this night past; that thou hast both safely kept me from all mine enemies, and also hast given me sweet sleep unto the great eomfort of my body. I most entirely beseeeh thee, O most mereiful Father, to show the like kindness towards me this day, in preserving my body and soul, that my enemies may have no power over me, and that I, likewise, may neither think, breathe, speak, or do anything that may be displeasing to thy fatherly goodness, dangerous to myself, or hurtful to my neighbour; but that all my enterprises may be agreeable to thy most blessed will, whieh is always good and godly, doing that which may advanee thy glory, answer to my voeation, and profit my neighbour, whom I ought to love as myself; that whensoever thou eallest me from this vale of misery, I may be found the ehild, not of darkness, but of light, and so for ever reign with thee in glory, who art the true and everlasting light. To whom, with thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, that most sweet Comforter, be all honour and glory. Amen.

* In addition to the prayers in the present work, the "Flower" includes others whieh are omitted, being chiefly for various sorts and conditions of men, and having espeeial referenee, in a greater or less degree, to the particular circumstanees and manner of life of those days. The prayers here retained, it is trusted, will not be less useful to the pious Christian now than when they were first written.

A Prayer for the Night.

O Lord God and my heavenly Father, forasmuch as by thy divine ordinance the night approaches, and darkness begins to overwhelm the earth, and time requires that we give ourselves to bodily rest and quietness; I render unto thee most hearty thanks for thy loving-kindness, who hast vouchsafed to preserve me this day from the danger of mine enemies; to give me my health, to feed me, and to send me all things necessary for the comfort of this my poor and needy life. I most humbly beseech thee for Jesus Christ's sake, that thou wilt mercifully forgive me all that I have this day committed against thy fatherly goodness, either in word, deed, or thought. And that thou wilt vouchsafe to shadow me this night under the comfortable wings of thy almighty power, and defend me from Satan, and from all his crafty assaults, that neither he nor any of his ministers shall have power over either my body or my soul; but that although my body through thy benefits enjoys sweet and pleasant sleep, yet my soul may continually watch unto thee, think of thee, delight in thee, and evermore praise thee; that when the joyful light of the day returns, according to thy godly appointment, I may rise again with a faithful soul, and undefiled body; and so afterward behave myself all the time of my life, according to thy blessed will and commandment, by casting away the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light; that men seeing my good works, may thereby be led to glorify thee, my heavenly Father, who, with thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, that most sweet Comforter, livest and reignest, one true and everlasting God, world without end. Amen.

The Confession of our Sins unto God the Father.

I am not able to express, oh wretched sinner that I am, how grievously the burden of my sins oppresses me. Whithersoever I turn me, whatsoever I do, speak, or think, I perceive such corruption and wickedness, such abomination and uncleanness to reign in me, that it utterly confounds my conscience, and in a manner fetters me with the chains of desperation. No marvel. For my outward man is flesh, earth, ashes, dust, and all that is most vile. My thoughts and disposition are altogether evil, even from my very

cradle; my heart is unclean, defiled with most filthy sin, wicked, and for the manifold wickedness thereof unable to be searched but of God alone. My works are abominable and loathsome in the sight of the Most High; yea, my very righteousnesses, if I have any, are even as a defiled cloth. Again, my inward man hath lost his former beauty. Instead of the image of God, he is miserably deformed with the wicked vizor* of wily Satan. In the place of innocency, faith, love, hope, patience, mercy, obedience, goodness, gentleness, liberality, joy, and such other fruits of the Holy Ghost; wickedness, unfaithfulness, hatred, desperation, vengeance, covetousness, rebellion, maliciousness, churlishness, unmercifulness, doubtfulness of mind, and such other damnable works of the flesh, are entered into me, and wholly possess me. So that whether I consider my outward or inward man, I find myself the bond-slave of Satan, the vile dunghill of sin, the miserable debtor of the law, the firebrand of hell, the child of wrath, the vessel of vengeance, the son of perdition, the wandering sheep, the wounded man, a hypocrite, an unprofitable servant, inheritor of everlasting pain, and all that is evil.

To rid myself of all these most detestable enormities I am not able. To seek remedy at any other man's hand, to buy their merits, prayers, watchings, fastings, and their other works, oh it is but vain! Moses cannot heal my diseases; neither the Levite nor the priest can bind up my wounds, and make them whole. For vain is the health that is looked for at man's hand. All have sinned, all have gone astray, all owe to that heavenly King ten thousand talents. All are become abominable, there is not one that doeth good, no not one. Ah who then can be made clean by them that are unclean? Ah, who, being sick, will seek to be made whole of them that are altogether diseased? Ah, who, being weak, will wish to be stayed up by him who for feebleness is not able to stand? Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard her spots? No more can they make me good who are themselves naught. Ah, whither then shall I flee? Unto myself, and unto mine own righteousness? I am a most damnable sinner, and of myself not able to think a good thought. Unto the law? It wounds, kills, and condemns me; it is a yoke that neither we, nor our fathers were ever able to bear. Unto creatures? They have not oil enough for themselves. Wretch that I

* Mask, false appearance.

am, destitute and void of all mortal help, shall I despair? Far be that from me. But were there not another manner of doctrine than the doctrine of the law, which makes no man perfect; were there not another manner of righteousness than is found in myself or in any other sinful creature, I see none other but plain desperation, death, damnation.

But thanks be unto thee, O heavenly Father, who, tendering the health of thy creatures, although sinful, so oft as they repent, believe, and study to amend their life, hast set forth in thy Holy Scriptures another doctrine, even the doctrine of the gospel, that most sweet, pleasant, and joyful tidings of our salvation, which comforts, cheers, and makes joyful weak consciences and sorrowful hearts; and another righteousness, even the righteousness of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, for whose sake thou art well pleased with man; and for whose innocency and righteousness, thou freely of thy bountiful goodness forgivest the sins of so many as with hearty repentance flee unto thy mercy. I therefore, O most merciful Father, staying and comforting my weak conscience with the sweet promises that I find in the holy gospel of thy dearly-beloved Son, made unto all that be faithfully penitent, without respect of persons, in the precious blood of thine aforesaid Son Jesus Christ, am bold, notwithstanding the multitude of my sins, at this present to come unto the throne of thy mercy, most humbly beseeching thee not to weigh my deserts, nor to deal with me according to my merits, who deserve nothing but wrath and damnation; for if thou shouldest narrowly mark our iniquities, O Lord, who shall abide it? But for the innocency and righteousness of thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ; whom thou hast given me to be mine own, and with him all his merits and good deeds, to be through faith so surely mine as though I myself had done and wrought them; to forgive me my sins according to thy promise, to renew thy fatherly love toward me, to receive me into thy favour, to make me a vessel of mercy, to number me in the company of thy chosen people, and to endue me with thy blessed Spirit; who may mortify my carnal affections, slay old Adam in me, work new and those spiritual and heavenly motions in my heart, and with his holy breath make me a new and perfect man, according unto thy blessed image. O most loving Father, weigh not my sins, but remember thy most gentle promises. Consider not my evil works,

but have respect unto the undefiled deeds of thy Son Jesus Christ; whom thou hast given to be my Redeemer, my Saviour, my righteousness, my atonement maker, my satisfaction, and the only and all wholly sufficient sacrifice for all my sins. For his sake, for his innocency and righteousness, have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, and for thy tender compassion put away all my unrighteousnesses. I have gone astray like a sheep that was lost; yet, O Lord, for thy mercies' sake, seek me out, lay me upon thy shoulders, and bring me home again unto thy sheepfold. I have been a lost son; I have riotously spent away my goods with the wicked; yet for thy goodness' sake, O Father, receive me, and take me home again, if not as thy son, yet as one of thy servants. I am grievously wounded, and can be helped neither by priest nor levite; yet cast me not away, good Lord, for thy tender mercies' sake, but pour wine and oil into my wounds, bind them up, and never leave me till thou hast made me perfectly whole. So shall I after this be the more circumspect in training my life according to thy blessed will, and evermore sing continual praises to thy most blessed name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all glory and honour, world without end. Amen.

A Confession of our Sins unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

The tyranny of Satan, mine old enemy, who ceases not daily to assail me with his subtle temptations, and to wound me with his cruel darts, compels me at this present time, O blessed Redeemer, and mine alone Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of the true and living God, to flee for succour unto the pitifulness of thy tender mercy, lest I be for ever swallowed up as a prey of that dreadful dragon. O Lord, I am feeble and weak, but Satan is strong and mighty, the prince of darkness and god of this world; having at his commandment an infinite multitude both of wicked spirits, and of ungodly men, who both daily and diligently labour to satisfy his cruel tyranny, and to work my destruction, whom to resist I am not able. Notwithstanding, Lord, thou art more valiant than he, stronger than all his army, more able to save than he to condemn. Yea, he is thy bond-slave. Thou rulest him as thy good pleasure is. He can rage against thine elect no further than thy most godly will is to suffer him. Thou, therefore,

O Lord my God, art able to deliver me from his ravening teeth, and to keep me safe from his blood-thirsty ministers. For thou art the blessed Seed of the woman, that treadest down the head, and destroyest the power of that old serpent. Thou art that Lord who hast swallowed up hell. Thou art the King of glory, who by thy death destroyedst him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Thou art that Michael who hast fought with the dragon and overcome him. Yea, thou art that Lion of the tribe of Judah, who hast vanquished all our enemies.

Moreover, not only Satan and his angels, but also the world and the flesh most grievously assail me, yea, and lead me away captive as their prey. The world with its vain pleasures, deceitful riches, and transitory possessions, so blinds the eyes of my heart, that I cannot love thee, O most sweet Saviour, with such pureness of mind as I ought. Notwithstanding, this comforts me well, that thou hast overcome the world, and that, whensoever it pleases thee to endue me with thy Holy Spirit, I may, through thy grace, subdue the world, and make that a bond-slave unto me, which now so mightily reigns, triumphs, and rules over me. The flesh also, with her subtle enticements, so wholly occupies me, that I am altogether flesh, and all that is evil, and by this means wholly without thy Holy Spirit. Yet hast thou, by the pureness of thy blessed flesh, which thou hast unfeignedly taken of the undefiled virgin, Mary thy mother, by the wonderful operation of the Holy Ghost, so slain the raging lusts of our sinful flesh, that whensoever we lament our case unto thee, confessing our misery and weakness, thou both art able, and also wilt, through thy Holy Spirit, quench those raging lusts, mortify those carnal affections, that so inordinately boil in our inward members, and make us truly spiritual.

Thus seest thou, O most merciful Redeemer, with how great a multitude of enemies I am besieged and set round about, who without ceasing seek my destruction, and have already most tyrannously spoiled me of my garments, and most grievously wounded me, leaving me half dead; so that without thy help I must needs perish. Help, therefore, O most sweet Saviour, and deliver me from these mine enemies. Heal thou me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Save thou me, and I shall be saved. Ah good Jesus, my sins are great and infinite, I confess, but thy mercies are much greater and more infinite. My wounds

are many and grievous, but thou art that most loving Samaritan, full of pity and compassion, who, by pouring wine and oil into my wounds, art sufficiently able to heal them, although they were ten thousand more. I am a sinner, but thou art a Saviour. I am sick, but thou art a physician. I am blind, but thou art the Light of the world. I am Satan's prisoner, but thou art a Redeemer. I am dead in sin, but thou art the Resurrection and life. I am hungry, but thou art the living Bread. I am thirsty, but thou art the Well of life. I am poor, but thou art the Lord of all wealth. I am a barren tree, but thou art that true and fruitful Vine. I am the lost sheep, but thou art that good Shepherd. I am that riotous son, but thou art that gentle Father. I am by nature the child of wrath, but thou art by nature the Son of the living God. I am by nature sinful man, but thou art by nature man righteous and innocent. I am a daily offender, but thou art a continual Mediator. I am a breaker of the law, but thou art a fulfiller of the same. I have lost the heavenly inheritance through sin, but thou hast recovered it by thy death. I have wrought mine own destruction, but thou by thy precious blood hast brought unto me salvation. Thus albeit, O most merciful Saviour, I find in myself nothing but sin, death, and damnation, yet in thee find I grace, mercy, favour, reconciliation, forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life. Take away therefore what is mine, which is all evil, and give me what is thine, which is all good.

Thou art called Christ; anoint me therefore, with thy Holy Spirit. Thou art called a Physician, according therefore to thy name, heal me. Thou art called the Son of the living God, according therefore to thy power deliver me from the devil, the world, and the flesh. Thou art called the Resurrection, lift me up therefore from the damnable state wherein I most miserably lie. Thou art called the Life, quicken me up therefore out of this death wherewith through sin I am most grievously detained. Thou art called the Way, lead me therefore from the vanities of this world, and from the filthy pleasures of the flesh, unto heavenly and spiritual things. Thou art called the Truth, suffer me not therefore to walk in the way of error, but cause me to tread the path of truth in all my doings. Thou art called the Light, put away therefore from me the works of darkness, that I may walk as the child of light in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Thou art called

a Saviour, save me therefore from my sins according to thy name. Thou art called Alpha and Omega, that is, the beginning and end of all goodness, begin thou therefore a good life in me, and finish the same unto the glory of thy blessed name. So shall I, receiving these benefits at thy merciful hand, praise thee and magnify thy blessed name for evermore. Amen.

A Confession of our Sins unto the Holy Ghost.

O most blessed and Holy Spirit, equal God with God the Father and God the Son, I miserable sinner, confounded in my conscience, and almost fallen, through the multitude of my sins, into the hell-like pit of desperation, am come at this present before thy divine majesty, most humbly to confess, and from the bottom of my heart to lament, all those my sins and wickednesses which from my youth hitherto I have unjustly committed, in word, deed, or thought, against thy goodness,—most entirely beseeching thee mercifully to forgive me all these mine offences and abominations, and to make in me a clean heart, endued with a new and right spirit; which may from henceforth, through thy godly governance, so direct me in all my doings, that I may only attempt such enterprises as are agreeable to thy blessed will, profitable to my neighbour, and pleasant to my soul. O Lord, my God, where thou art there is liberty. But I, through the crafts of Satan, the lusts of the flesh, and the pleasures of the world, am in most miserable captivity, slavery, bondage, and thraldom; whereby I evidently perceive that thou dwellest not in me, neither that I am thy temple, nor yet have that ghostly* freedom wherewith all are endued that have thee dwelling in them. O Lord, have mercy on me, and take away from me that heavy bondage of the flesh wherewith I am most grievously cloyed, and give me that sweet and free liberty of the spirit, which by thee is wrought in the hearts of the faithful; that I, being delivered from the power of mine enemies, may serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Again, that thou, making me a new creature by mortifying old Adam in me, and by giving me a good spirit, mayest delight in me as a father in his son, and continually dwell in me as in thy holy temple. O blessed Spirit, forgive me my sins; purify my mind with thy holy inspiration; comfort my

* Spiritual.

weak heart with thy joyful presence; make my troubled conscience joyful with true and spiritual rejoicing; lead me, who have so long erred, into all godly truth; give me the knowledge of all heavenly and spiritual things, even so much as is necessary for my salvation; put on me the shield of faith, that I may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil; kindle my heart with the fire of Christian love; make me a fruitful olive tree in the congregation of my Lord God; give me patience in tribulation; take away from me vain glory in prosperity; engraft in my heart continual humility; make me bold to confess the truth of thy gospel before the tyrants of this world, and give me grace to persevere in the same unto the end; replenish my breast with thy heavenly gifts and spiritual treasures, that the devil, the world, and the flesh, with all their works, pomps, and vanities, being utterly secluded and put apart from me, thou mayest continually dwell in me by thy godly inspirations, and I in thee through true and undoubted faith, doing that alway that is good and pleasant in thy sight, unto the glory of thy blessed name, who livest and reignest with God the Father and God the Son, in one majesty, power, and glory, very God, world without end. Amen.

A Prayer for the King.

O Almighty God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, who by thy divine ordinance hast appointed temporal rulers to govern thy people according to equity and justice, and to live among them as a loving father among his children, unto the advancement of the good, and punishment of the evil; we most humbly beseech thee favourably to behold thy servant, our king and governor, and to breathe into his heart, through thy Holy Spirit, that wisdom which is ever about the throne of thy Majesty, whereby he may be excited, moved, and stirred to love, fear, and serve thee, to seek thy glory, to banish idolatry, superstition, and hypocrisy out of this his realm, and unfeignedly to advance thy holy and pure religion among us his subjects, unto the example of other foreign nations. O Lord, defend him from his enemies, send him long and prosperous life among us, and give him grace not only in his own person godly and justly to rule, but also to appoint such magistrates under him as may be likewise affected both toward thy holy word, and toward the commonweal. That we his

subjects, being under his dominion in all godliness, peace, and wealth, may pass the time of this our short pilgrimage in thy fear and service, unto the glory of thy blessed name, which alone is worthy of all honour for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer for the King's Council.

It is written, O most mighty and everlasting King, that where many are that give good counsel, there it goeth well with the common people, there are all things preserved in a goodly and seemly order, there does the public weal flourish with the abundance of all good things. May it please thee, therefore, O Lord, who hast the hearts of all rulers in thy hand, and directest their counsels unto what is thy good pleasure, mercifully to assist all those who are the king's council, and to give them thy Holy Spirit to be their president, ruler, and governor; that in all their assemblies, they may ever set before their eyes thy most high and princelike Majesty, the fear of thy name, the accomplishment of thy commandment, and always remember that they are servants appointed for the wealth and good of thy people; that whatsoever they attempt privately or openly, may turn unto the glory of thy blessed name, unto the setting forth of thy holy word, unto the advancement of the king's honour, unto the profit of the commons, unto the destruction of vice, and unto the commendation of virtue. Give them grace, O most merciful Father, so with one mind to consent in all godly and righteous things, that they, ruling righteously, and we, living obediently, may altogether, with quiet hearts and free consents, praise and magnify thee our Lord God for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer for Fathers and Mothers.

Forasmuch, O heavenly Father, as thou hast dealt with the children of men more nobly than with brute beasts, and others thy creatures, by giving them not only an amiable body, but also a mind which is immortal, and never shall die; and for the garnishing of the same, that it may be made like unto the similitude, likeness, and image of thee, thou hast, in thy holy law, commanded fathers and mothers, whom thou hast blessed with the gift of children, to take diligent care for the virtuous bringing up of their sons and daughters, that they may learn, even from their very cradles, to know thee their Lord God, to believe in thee, to

fear and love thee, to call upon thy blessed name, to be thankful unto thee, and to walk in thy holy commandments all the days of their life—we, knowing how froward, evil-disposed, and untoward, the heart, understanding, and disposition of man are, even from his very youth, if they be not restrained with the bridle of thy most blessed law, heartily pray thee to give to all fathers and mothers grace, after the example of Abraham, David, Philip the evangelist, and such others, to bring up their children, even from their very infancy, in thy fear, in thy nurture, and in the knowledge of thy most healthful word; that they, seeking no less the garnishing of their children's minds with learning and virtue, than the preserving of their bodies with food and raiment, may show themselves profitable members of the Christian public weal, and faithful servants to thee their Lord God, who alone art worthy of all honour and glory. Amen.

A Prayer for Children.

As thou, O merciful Father, hast given commandment unto all fathers and mothers to bring up their children in thy fear, nurture, and doctrine; so likewise thy good pleasure is, that children should honour and reverence their parents, diligently give ear unto their virtuous instructions, and faithfully obey them. And as thou hast promised health, honour, glory, riches, long life, and all that is good, unto them that honour, reverence, and humbly obey their fathers and mothers, so hast thou threatened unto disobedient children, ignominy, evil-fame, contempt, shame, dishonour, poverty, sickness, short life, and such other plagues. Yea, in thy holy law thou dost not only pronounce them accursed that dishonour their fathers and mothers, but thou also commandest that if any child be stubborn and disobedient, and will not hear, but rather despises the commandment of his father and mother, the same should be stoned unto death without mercy—so greatly dost thou abhor disobedience and rebellion against all persons, but especially against parents. We therefore, heartily wishing that the plagues of thy fierce wrath may be far from us, for thou, O God, art a consuming fire, most humbly beseech thee to grave in the hearts of all children of whatsoever age, kind, estate, or degree they be, true honour, hearty reverence, and unfeigned obedience toward their parents. Give them grace, O good Lord, that as they profess thy Son Christ

in name, so they may truly represent his manners in their life and conversation, who willingly was obedient unto his mother Mary, and unto her husband Joseph, giving example to all children of the like subjection and obedience toward their parents. Engraft in them such a love towards their fathers and mothers, that they may both reverence them with outward honour, and also after their power help them, succour them, provide for them, comfort and cherish them in their need, even as their parents nourished and comforted them in their infancy and tender age. But above all things, give them grace truly to honour thee, who art the heavenly Father, yea, our Father and our Redeemer, who hast made us, and daily cherishest us, even as a father or mother cherishes their own most dear children. So shall it come to pass, that they faithfully honouring thee, shall also heartily honour and unfeignedly obey their earthly parents in thy fear, unto the glory of thy most blessed name, which is most worthy to be honoured, world without end. Amen.

A Prayer for Masters.

Although, O Christ, thou most high Lord, all power both in heaven and in earth be given unto thee of thy heavenly Father, and albeit thou hast given us a commandment, that we should not desire to be called master, for we have but one Master, which thou art, and all we are brethren, having one Father which is in heaven; yet forasmuch as thou, according to thy blessed will, hast appointed some to be superiors, some inferiors, some masters, some servants, some to command, some to obey, some to rule, some to serve; and by this means such as are in superiority have obtained by thy holy word, the name of masters or lords, because they have servants under them, and rule under thee, according to thy good pleasure and godly appointment; who art the most supreme power and excellent Majesty, King of kings, and Lord of lords, to whom all things both in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, do bow their knees and give reverence and honour; whose praise also every nation and language doth advance and set forth, confessing that thou art the Lord Jesus Christ, unto the glory of God the Father—we most humbly pray thee, who art the greatest Master, and most high Lord, to send thy Holy Spirit upon all such as are called masters

here in earth, and have superiority over others; that they, remembering themselves to be thy servants, and that they also have a Master in heaven, with whom there is no respect of persons, may put away all threatenings, all cruelty, all unrighteousness, and do that unto their servants which is just and equal. Grant that they entreat not evil their servants that work truly, nor the hireling that is faithful unto them. Grant that they be not as lions in their houses, destroying their household folks, and oppressing such as are under them; but rather that they cherish and love their faithful and discreet servants even as their own soul, and by no means suffer them to be unrewarded for their pains-taking, nor yet at the last to be driven to beggary for their true service-doing; but that they liberally reward them according to their deserts, and may show themselves to be thy true servants; who leavest no man unrewarded, but givest to every man according to his deeds—to them that do well and continue in well doing, glory, honour, peace, immortality, and everlasting life; to them that do evil and continue in the same, indignation, wrath, displeasure, trouble, sorrow, and eternal damnation. Grant, therefore, O Lord, that all temporal masters, may in all their doings resemble thee who art the heavenly and everlasting Master, and so behave themselves both toward their servants and all others, according to thy blessed will, that at the last day they may be found in the number of them to whom thou shalt say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Lord, let it so come to pass. Amen.

A Prayer for Servants.

O Christ, my Lord and Saviour, who, being the Son of the living God, yea, God himself, from everlasting, didst not disdain, at the will of thine heavenly Father, to make thyself of no reputation, to become man, to take upon thee the form of a servant, and to obey thy Father's commandment to the death, yea, even the death of the cross, for our salvation; refusing no service, no travail, no labour, no pain, that might make unto the comfort of mankind—we most humbly beseech thee to give all servants grace to practise thy humility and obedience, that as thou most willingly didst serve, and obey thy heavenly Father's good pleasure, so they in like manner, may with most hearty

affection, serve and obey their bodily masters in all things that fight not with thy blessed word, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; that whatsoever they do, they may do it heartily, even as unto the Lord and not unto men; forasmuch as they are sure that they shall receive the reward of the heavenly inheritance of thee, O Lord Christ, whom also they serve while truly and faithfully they serve their bodily masters. Grant that so many as are under the yoke, may count their masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not evil spoken of; and obey them with all fear, not only if they be good and courteous, but also those that are froward; and please them in all things, not answering them again, nor picking ought from them, but show all good faithfulness, that in all things they may do worship unto the doctrine of thee our God and Saviour, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all honour, praise, and glory, for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for them that are Sick and in Adversity.

O Jesus the Saviour of the world, and the true Physician both of the body and of the soul, we are not altogether ignorant how detestable sin is in thy sight, and how greatly thou abhorrest them that commit iniquity, and shake off the yoke of thy law, giving their minds to the filthy lusts of the flesh, and the vain pleasures of the world. Some that thus ungodly behave themselves, thou sufferest to go forth still in their beastlike manners, without correction or punishment; to live in pleasure and wantonness upon the earth; to nourish their hearts as for a day of slaughter; to serve their belly as their God; and voluptuously to spend their days without all fear of thee; that at the last, they being altogether nourshed* in voluptuousness, and dying without repentance, for the sorrows, plagues, and punishments of the wicked begin at their death, may, with that rich glutton, be tormented for ever in the flames of hell-fire. For it is fitting that they who in this world live all in pleasure, should in another world receive their pains, even as thou hast promised in thy holy gospel, saying, "Wo be to you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Wo be to you that now laugh, for ye shall wail and weep." Again, some that walk inordinately and contrary to the rules of thy holy law,

* Nursed, brought up.

thou, tendering their salvation, visitest them with sickness, and punishest their bodies with the loving rod of thy correction; that they may no longer be proud, cruel, and fierce against the spirit, whose servant and bond-slave the body of right ought to be; but rather be obedient and serviceable, that it may from henceforth not so much as once lust against the spirit; and by this means thou mercifully callest them, who as wandering sheep have so long strayed abroad, home again unto thy sheep-fold. For this, O Lord, is an evident token of thine exceeding goodness and tender mercy toward us, when thou, seeing that we most grievously, through our wicked and sinful conversation, offend thy divine majesty, forsake thy law, walk not in thy ordinances, break thy statutes, and keep not thy commandments; yet thou dost not take away from us thy loving-kindness, but visitest our iniquities with thy gentle rod, and punishest our sins with thy corrections—sweet to the spirit, but bitter to the flesh; for while we are punished, we are corrected of the Lord, lest we should with this world be condemned; and by this means thou provokest us to leave our riotous and ungodly manners, and to seek after thee, our most loving Saviour, leading a life from henceforth according to thy most blessed will and commandment.

Some also thou throwest into adversity, and punishest with sickness, to prove and try their faith, whether they be constant in confessing, calling upon thee, and praising thy holy name; like unto that patient man and faithful warrior, who said, "If we have received good and prosperous things at the Lord's hand, why should we not be content to suffer evil and troublous things? The Lord gave them, the Lord hath taken them away; as it pleased the Lord, so is it come to pass, blessed be the name of the Lord!" So many, O Lord, as thou lovest, thou visitest sometimes with thy loving rod of correction, lest they, continually enjoying too much felicity and wealth of worldly things, should forget thee their Lord God, and walk in the vanities of a wicked mind. For if we endure chastening, thou offerest thyself unto us as unto sons. For whom thou lovest, him thou chastenest, and thou scourgest every son that thou receivest. What son is that whom the father chasteneth not? If we be not under correction whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. And albeit no manner of chastening for the present time seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it bringeth the

quiet fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised therein.

Forasmuch therefore, O most merciful Saviour, as sickness and adversity are sent from thee unto the children of men, for their great profit and singular advantage; even that the body with the works thereof, should be subject to the spirit; and as witnesses and seals of thy loving-kindness and hearty good-will toward them—we most heartily pray thee, mercifully to behold all such as are sick, and, like that pitiful Samaritan, to pour wine and oil into their wounds, and to bind them up, that is to comfort them, giving them grace patiently to bear the cross which thou hast laid upon them, to show themselves conformable to thy blessed will, and in the midst of their trouble and sickness, to praise thy glorious name, and with strong faith to say, Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath stricken us, and he will surely make us whole. For it is the Lord that bringeth down to the grave, and setteth up again. It is the Lord that punisheth with poverty, and maketh wealthy again. It is the Lord that bringeth low, and lifteth up again; yea, it is the Lord that killeth, and maketh alive again. It is for our great profit that the Lord hath thus plagued us, even that we should learn to forsake our own fleshly will, and to walk in his holy ordinances. Therefore as it is God's good pleasure, so let it come to pass. His will be done, and not ours. We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture, let him deal with us as seemeth best in his godly sight. For whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Give them grace, O sweet Jesus, thus to be persuaded of thy good will, even in the midst of the shadow of death, that they faint not under the cross, and become of a desperate mind, but valiantly abide thy good pleasure, and all the time of their trouble and sickness, patiently and thankfully call upon thy blessed name, which is a strong tower for all them that flee unto it; and ever set before their eyes thy loving kindness, believing steadfastly that although their cross be painful to the flesh, yet is it sweet to the spirit; and albeit the outward man be made weak through it, yet is the inward man made strong, which wishes to be loosened from this wretched body, and to be with thee in glory. For so long as we are at home in the body, we are absent from the fruition and sight of thy divine majesty. O Lord, it is not thy property always to chide, always to be angry,

neither to deal with us aeeording to our sins, nor yet to reward us after our iniquities; but as a tender father pitieth his own son, so art thou mereiful to sinners, if they repent, believe, and amend. For thou eamest into this world, not to eall the righteous, but sinners to repentanee; neither art thou a Physician for the whole, but for the sick. Be thou therefore, O most mereiful Saviour, a Physician to such as are diseased, either in body or soul; and after this thy loving eorreetion, restore unto them the benefit of health both eorporeally and spiritually. Make whole so many as acknowledge their miseries, repent them of their sinful manners, flee unto thee for suecour, believing to enjoy all good things at thy mereiful hand. And as thou hast made them sorrowful with laying thy cross upon them, so make thou them joyful by restoring unto them the gift of health, that they may live and glorify thy blessed name for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for a faithful Man being in trouble or endurance.

O Lord, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, who rulest and disposest all things after thine unsearehable wisdom, and workest in thy ereatures according to thy blessed will, whieh is always good and godly, howsoever blind and frail flesh judgeth of it, we know and unfeign-edly eonfess thy omnipotenee and almighty power. We know that thou art able to do whatsoever thy good plea-sure is. We know that thou bringest down to the grave, and settest up again. Thou punishest with poverty, and makest wealthy again. Thou bringest low, and liftest up again. Yea, thou, O Lord, killest and makest alive again. Oh wonderfully dost thou work in all thy ereatures, spe-eially in them whom thou hast appointed to be vessels of mercy, and inheritors of thine eternal glory! If they at any time grievously offend thy divine majesty, (as we are all sinners and ready at every moment to fall,) thou dost neither long wink at their wickedness, nor yet for ever east them from thy favour, but like a loving physieian, with some emplasture or salve, although bitter to the flesh, yet wholesome to the soul, thou healest them; and like a tender or gentle father, eorrectest them with some temporal pun-ishment; that by this means, they, escaping everlasting punishment, may repent of their ungodly behaviour, confess

their wickedness, flee unto thy mercy, and for ever after be the more circumspect in treading the paths of thy holy law. On this manner didst thou handle the Israelites when they offended thy fatherly goodness. On this manner didst thou deal with king David and the prophet Jonah, for their disobedience, with many others, whom, notwithstanding, for thy mercies' sake, after they had acknowledged their offences, and called upon thy holy name, thou wonderfully deliveredst and broughtest again, as it were, into the haven of quietness. We therefore, thy poor and sorrowful creatures, perceiving in thy Holy Scriptures such large fountains of thy great mercies, plenteously issuing out toward all them that are of a contrite and broken heart, are bold, at this present, for thy promise sake, to come unto thee, most humbly beseeching thee, that as thou deliveredst Jonas out of the whale's belly, Daniel from prison, Peter thine apostle out of ward, David from the hands of his enemies, with others; so in like manner thou wilt deliver and set at liberty thy servant and our faithful brother, yea, and that on such sort that it may be to thy glory, to his health, and to the comfort of so many as unfeignedly love thy blessed word. And although we, for our imperfection, be not worthy to crave and enjoy so great and comfortable benefit at thy merciful hand, yet we doubt not, but for thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ's sake, thou wilt most favourably hear us, most fatherly pity us, and most bounteously grant us this our humble request. And we again, receiving this benefit of our dear brother's deliverance, of thy hand, shall not be unthankful; but continually magnify thy holy and glorious name, who dealest so favourably with thy servants when they call upon thee in the name of Jesus Christ, thy only begotten Son, and our only Mediator and Advocate, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all praise and honour for ever and ever. Amen.

A Thanksgiving for his Deliverance.

So often as we consider thy wonderful works, O blessed and heavenly Father, which thou workest of thine own good will, for so many as in their trouble and adversity flee for refuge unto thy holy name, as unto a strong hold and mighty fortress, we cannot but confess and acknowledge thy singular kindness and unspeakable good will, which thou continually, through thy fatherly goodness, bearest

towards thy servants; and for the same, not merited of any man, but freely of thy mercy given, we render unto thee, according to our most bounden duty, most hearty praises and entire thanks. In consideration whereof, the children of Israel, being in miserable captivity, lamentably lamenting before thee their very sorrowful state by hearty prayers, after that thou hadst delivered them from that land of servitude, burst out into exceeding great praises, glorifying thy most holy and blessed name for their sweet and comfortable deliverance. When thou hadst delivered Joseph, Daniel, Peter, and many others thy servants, from their sorrows and calamities; oh, who is able to express with how ready and glad minds, they magnified thee and thy holy name. We, therefore, sinful wretches, excited and stirred up with the godly examples of these thy servants, knowing how greatly thou delightest in the sacrifice of praise,—confessing also (such is our beggary) that we have none other thing worthy to offer unto thy divine majesty—at this present gathered together to celebrate thy great mercies, to magnify thy blessed name, and to render unto thee most humble thanks and immortal praise, that it hath pleased thee, of thine exceeding goodness, the rather at the contemplation of our prayers, to show thy favourable mercy in the deliverance of thy servant and our dear brother N. unto our singular joy and great comfort. For this thy benefit, most beneficial Father, we thank thee as heartily as heart can think; most entirely beseeching thee that thou wilt give us all grace, even so many as love thy blessed word, never to be unmindful of this thy benefit, nor to commit any thing hereafter that should offend thy fatherly goodness, or provoke thy wrath against us; lest through our disobedience, we, after this, feel more bitter tokens of thy heavy displeasure than hitherto we have done; but in all our enterprises, so to behave ourselves, according to thy blessed will, that thou mayest delight in us as a Father in his children, and vouchsafe to bless us with all spiritual blessings, to enrich us with the knowledge of thy heavenly word, and to work in us a life conformable to the same; that others, seeing our godly manners and Christian conversation, may be encouraged to embrace thy blessed word, to magnify thy holy name, and in all points to frame their life according to the rule of thy holy commandments, through the inspiration of thy blessed Spirit, to whom, with thee, and thy dearly beloved Son

Jesus Christ, be all honour, praise, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer for our Enemies.

The poisonous corruption of our nature, which we have sucked out of our first parents Adam and Eve, worketh so strongly in us, O Lord, and so mightily striveth against the motions of thy Holy Spirit, that we cannot do what we would, nor accomplish what thou requirest of us. Thou hast commanded us to love, not only our friends, but also our enemies; to forgive them that offend us, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them that do us wrong and persecute us; yea, if our enemy hunger, to feed him; if he thirst, to give him drink; but our corrupt nature, which ever striveth against thy blessed will, seeketh all means possible to be revenged, to requite tooth for tooth, and eye for eye, to render evil for evil, when vengeance is thine and thou wilt reward; and by this means we grievously offend thee, and break the order of charity and the bond of peace, which seeketh not to be revenged, but to forgive one another, even as Christ forgave us. May it please thee therefore, O most merciful Lord, of thy bountiful goodness, to forgive our enemies, and not to lay to their charge those things which they have unjustly committed against us, and so to slay in us our old corrupt and cankered nature, by taking away from us our stony heart, and by giving us a fleshy heart, that we, through the operation of thy Holy Spirit, may be content according to thy blessed will and commandment; and after the example of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, and of the blessed martyr St. Stephen, freely, and even from the very heart, to forgive our enemies, to speak well of them, to love them, to do for them whatsoever lies in our power; and by this means unfeignedly show ourselves to be thy sons, who causest the sun to arise on the evil and on the good, and sendest the rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous; giving us example, that we, if we will be thy true sons, should do likewise, and show ourselves beneficial, not only to the good and godly, but also to the wicked and ungodly; that by this means we may allure even the very adversaries of thy truth to speak well of the professors of thy blessed name, and to glorify thee, our heavenly Father, who fashionest us according to thy manners, through the mighty working of thy Holy

Spirit, to whom, with thee, and thy only begotten Son, be all glory and honour. Amen.

A Prayer for the Adversaries of God's truth, and that all men may come to the true knowledge of God's blessed word.

It is truly said by thine holy apostle, O most merciful Saviour, that the natural man perceiveth not the things that pertain unto the Spirit of God; for they are but foolishness unto him, neither can he perceive them because they are spiritually examined. This daily experience teacheth us to be true in the most part of men, especially in the wise and prudent of this world, from whom the heavenly Father is wont to hide his heavenly mysteries, and to show them to the humble and lowly. For while the wise worldlings seek praise one of another, they cannot love the glory of God. While they cleave to their own fleshly wisdom, they cannot abide the wisdom of God, which is counted foolishness in their sight. While they go about to maintain old crooked customs, superstitious ceremonies, the trifling traditions of men, they cannot endure the light of thine heavenly truth. While they magnify themselves, are ashamed to be taught, and by no means will confess their ignorance and error, but persuade themselves that they are in the truth, when indeed they are under the father of lies; and that they walk in the light, when they are most of all wrapped about, yea, and overwhelmed with the misty clouds of men's inventions; while also they abhor to hear the preachers of thy word, and judge whatsoever they speak now, to be erroneous and false doctrine, it cometh to pass, that they hate, persecute, banish, and condemn, both thy blessed word and all the favourers thereof, thinking themselves to do thee high service, when they slay such as unfeignedly profess thy gospel. And forasmuch as this hate conceived against thy holy word, and this cruelty against thy servants cometh from the wise of this world, the simple and ignorant people also, for lack of knowledge, yield themselves unto the fancies of the wily worldlings, and the dreams of the sensual hypocrites, approving what they approve, condemning what they condemn, and believing what they believe. By this means is it come to pass, that the adversaries of thy blessed word are wonderful many in number, and very few are they who sincerely, purely, and with the heart, embrace and follow thy hea-

venly doctrine. No marvel, for little is thy flock, O Lord, to whom it hath pleased thy Father to give the kingdom of heaven, and although many be made, yet few shall be saved. For many are called, but few are chosen; so that the true lovers of thy word are few, and the enemies thereof are many.

But, O Lord, this comforts us well, that although the adversaries of thy truth be innumerable, and albeit the powers of this world stand up and come together tumultuously ever so much, against the Lord and his Anointed, and by no means will submit themselves to the yoke of thy blessed law, but seek by all means possible to break it, and to cast it away from them, yet shall they not prevail; their imaginations, their counsels, and devices shall come to nought. For there is no wisdom, no forecast, no counsel which can prevail against the Lord. Thou that dwellest in heaven, mockest their vain enterprises, and laughest both them and all their most subtle devices to scorn.

For thou art that Rock against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail. Thou art that Stone upon whom whosoever falleth, he shall be crushed in pieces, but upon whomsoever it falleth, it shall grind him to powder. Thou art that Prick against whom it is hard to spurn. Thou art that most victorious and triumphant Lion of the tribe of Judah, against whom no flesh can prevail. Thou art that Lord who bringest to nought the counsels of the ungodly, and reprovest the thoughts of the people, yea, thou makest of no force all the counsels, devices, and imaginations of princes, establishing thine own counsel, and making the thoughts of thine own heart to abide certain and sure for ever and ever. And as thou art a Lord of most strong puissance, so is thy blessed word of most mighty force. For it is a twybill* that cleaveth the hard stony rock asunder. It is a consuming fire devouring all the adversaries thereof. Seeing then that as the devices of the wise worldlings are wicked, so are they vain and of no force, and shall surely be brought to nought at the time by thee before appointed, for every plant that thy heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up by the roots; may it please thee, who madest Saul of a wolf a lamb, of a persecutor a preacher, of a tyrant an apostle, to bring these adversaries of thy truth unto the knowledge of their error, that they may repent, believe, and amend.

* An iron tool used by masons.

O Lord, they are thy creatures, and thou hast no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live; have mercy on them, suffer them not to perish, make them of the vessels of wrath, the vessels of mercy; of the enemies of thy truth, lovers and embracers of thy truth. Take away from them their hard and stony heart, and give them a fleshy, soft, and gentle heart. Replenish them with thy Holy Spirit, and with the graces thereof; that as they are thy creatures with us, so they may be saved with us. For we are taught that thou hatest none of all those things which thou hast made, and that thou passest by the sins of men for repentance sake, and art ready to have mercy on all men that repent, believe, and amend.

Again, seeing that no man can come unto thee except thy Father draw him, we most heartily beseech thee, who alone art our only Mediator and Advocate, to pray unto thy heavenly Father, that he may have mercy upon the enemies of thy word, and turn away his wrath from them, lighten his loving countenance upon them, give them a good spirit, and make them thy true and unfeigned disciples.

Grant also, O sweet Saviour, who willest all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, that all such as walk in ignorance, blindness, and error, for lack of doctrine, may have faithful preachers sent unto them; who may instruct them with thy heavenly word, bring them out of darkness into light, deliver them from the bondage of man's traditions, and place them in the sweet liberty of the Spirit. So shall it come to pass, that they who now are not thy people, shall be thy people, and they who now abhor and deface the glory of thy word, shall be the valiant promoters and defenders of the same; and all such as heretofore have walked, through ignorance, in all kinds of superstition and ungodliness, shall from henceforth walk in the glorious light of thy gospel, praise thee and magnify thee, obey thee and serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life, unto the glory of thy blessed name. Amen.

A Prayer to preserve the Fruits of the Earth.

At the beginning thou commandedst the earth, O Lord, to bring forth green grass, herbs, and trees, with their seeds and fruits, that they might be meat to thy creatures

living on the earth, both to man and beast. After that deep and great flood wherein all living creatures perished, except Noah and such as were with him in the ark, not only herbs, seeds, and fruits gavest thou unto man for to eat, but also all others thy creatures that move or live on the earth, and the fish and fowl; so that all things are pure to them that are pure, neither can any thing be common or unclean, that thou hast made pure and clean. For all thy creatures, O Lord God, are good, and none of them are to be refused, if they be taken with thanksgiving. For they are sanctified by thy word and by prayer, and were ordained of thee to be received with thanksgiving of the faithful, and of them that know the truth.

Seeing then that thou alone art the Creator and Maker of all things, and hast prepared herbs, seeds, fruits, fish, and flesh, to be meat for man; seeing also that without thy blessing, all these thy creatures prosper not, nor yet come unto a fortunate end; but grow out of kind, wither away, perish, die, and come to nought, we most humbly beseech thee to bless us, and all the fruits of the earth with all others thy creatures, which thou hast made for man's use and profit. And forasmuch as neither he that planteth, nor he that watereth, is any thing, but thou, O God, who givest the increase, grant, we pray thee, that the earth may give forth her fruit prosperously and plenteously, that we may enjoy the same in due and convenient time, unto our great joy and comfort. Let not the labours of our hands which we have taken in thy name, and according to thy word, be found vain and frustrate, but according to thy promise bless all our labours, and bring them unto a happy end. For we, O Lord, feed not ourselves, but we are the sheep of thy pasture. Thou feedest us. Thou givest meat to the hungry. Thou preparest man his corn, and providest for the earth. Thou waterest her furrows, thou breakest the hard clods thereof, thou makest it soft with the drops of rain, and blessest the increase of it. Thou crownest the year with thy bountifulness, and thy footsteps drop fatness. Thou also makest the dwellings of the wilderness fat, that they drop withal, and the little hills makest thou pleasant on every side. Yea, thou makest the vallies to stand so thick with corn, that they laugh and sing. Thou causest the wells to spring up among the vallies, and the waters to run among the hills, that all the beasts of the field may have drink, and that the wild asses may quench their thirst.

Thou waterest the hills from above, the earth is filled with the fruits of thy works. Thou bringest forth grass for the cattle and green herbs for the service of man. Thou bringest food out of the earth, wine to make glad the heart of man, oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! right wisely hast thou made them all, yea, the earth is full of thy riches. It is by thy blessing that our garners are full, and plenteous with all manner of store; that our sheep bring forth thousands, and hundred thousands in our villages and fields; that our oxen are lusty and fat; that we have all things plenteously for the sustenance of our bodies. For when thou openest thy hand, thou fillest every living creature with thy blessing, but when thou hidest thy face, they are sorrowful, mourn, and die for hunger. Forasmuch then, O most merciful Father, as we receive of thee alone all good things, vouchsafe, we most heartily beseech thee, to show us thy face, to lighten thy countenance upon us, to bless us, to make the earth fruitful, and to preserve the fruits of the same; that we thy creatures, receiving at thy merciful hand all things necessary for this our needy and beggarly life, may live and magnify thy blessed name, both in this world and in the world to come, through Jesus Christ, thy Son and our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer that we may have the fear of God before our eyes in all our doings.

O Almighty and everlasting God, thy holy word teacheth us that thou art not only a Father, but also a Lord; not only a Forgiver, but also an Avenger; not only a Saviour, but also a Judge. And as thou, being a Father, a Forgiver, and Saviour, dost pardon and show mercy; so thou being a Lord, an Avenger, a Judge, punishest and condemnest. Neither do thy Holy Scriptures set forth unto us only a gospel which comforts us, quickens us, shows us joyful tidings, forgives our sins, quiets our conscience, and brings unto us everlasting life; but also a law which reproves, accuses, condemns us, wounds and slays our conscience, yea, and throws us down headlong into the deep dungeon of hell. And as the gospel lifts us up and makes us joyful, with the hope of remission and forgiveness of our sins, so does the law pluck us down, and almost drive us unto desperation, for fear of the plagues and everlasting

punishments which thou hast prepared for them that despise thy holy ordinances; so that we may not only love thee as a Father, a Forgiver, a Saviour, but also fear thee as a Lord, an Avenger, a Judge. Forasmuch, therefore, O most gentle Saviour, and most righteous Judge, as nothing does so mightily put away sin, and make us to walk in the way of thy commandments, as reverently to fear thee, to stand in awe of thy judgment and heavy displeasure, we most entirely pray thee to give us that fear which thou requirest of us in thy Holy Scriptures, and whereunto thou hast promised so many large and bounteous benefits, that we may not only love thee as a Saviour, and honour thee as a Father, but also reverence thee as a Lord, and fear thee as a Judge. O Lord, all things are open unto thine eyes, neither is any thing hid from thee, who seest the very secrets and most inward thoughts of our hearts; give us, therefore, grace, that in all our enterprises we ever set thy fear before our eyes, and stand in awe of thee and of thy righteous judgments, that we attempt nothing whereby we should provoke thy heavy displeasure against us, but so walk in thy fear, and in thy holy ordinances, that we may at all times love thee as a Saviour, honour thee as a Father, reverence thee as a Lord, and fear thee as a Judge. So shall it come to pass, that we, reverently fearing thee as the child his father, shall not only avoid all such evils as might make thee our heavy Lord and fierce Judge, but also embrace those virtues which shall both evidently declare our faithful love, true honour, unfeigned reverence, and humble fear toward thee, and also make thee our loving father and most merciful Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Faith.

We are taught by thy holy apostle, O most loving Saviour, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and that it is impossible to please thee without faith, and therefore they that come unto thee must believe that thou art God, yea, and such a God as is both able, and also will abundantly reward all them that with true faith seek thee. For thine eyes, O Lord, look upon faith, and thou dost appear and show thyself unto them that have faith in thee; yea, through faith, thou, being the King of glory, art married to the souls of the faithful, and makest them partakers of thy divine nature, through the wonderful working of thy

blessed Spirit. Through faith so many as believe are justified, made the sons and heirs of God, and have everlasting life. By faith we obtain of God all good things, even whatsoever we ask in thy name. Seeing that faith is so precious a jewel in thy sight, that without it nothing is acceptable unto thy divine Majesty, and we of our own nature cannot have this most singular treasure, except thou givest it unto us from above, and dost breathe it into our hearts by thy Holy Spirit—for we of ourselves are blind, ignorant, foolish, and by no means can perceive the things that pertain to the Spirit of God—we most heartily beseech thee to take away from us all infidelity and unfaithfulness, which we received of old Adam, and to plant in us true faith and undoubted belief, that we may be thoroughly persuaded that thou art the Son of the living God, very God and very man, our only sweet-smelling sacrifice, our only Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor; our only wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; by whom alone, and for whose sake only, thy heavenly Father is well pleased with us, our sins are remitted, and grace and everlasting life are freely given unto us. O Lord God, suffer us not to lean to our own wisdom, nor to believe as blind flesh fancieth, nor to seek salvation where superstition dreams, but let our faith be grounded only on thy word, and give us grace truly to believe in thee, with all our heart to put our trust in thee, to look for all good things of thee, to call upon thy blessed name in adversity, and with joyful voices, and more joyful hearts, to praise and magnify it in prosperity. Suffer us not to doubt either of God thy heavenly Father, or of thee God his Son, or of God the Holy Ghost, but earnestly to believe, that being the distinct persons in the Deity, thou art notwithstanding one very God, besides whom there is no God, either in heaven or in earth. Grant also that we may assuredly believe whatsoever is contained in the Holy Scriptures, and by no means suffer ourselves to be plucked from the verity thereof, but mainly and steadfastly abide in the same, even unto death, though the world rage, and the devil roar. And this faith, O sweet Jesus, increase thou daily in us more and more, that at the last through thy goodness, we may be made perfect and strong men in thy holy religion, and show ourselves both before thee and the world, truly faithful, by bringing forth plenty of good works unto the glory and honour of thy name, who, with God the Father, and

God the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest true God, world without end. Amen.

A Prayer for Charity.

Thy holy apostle writeth, O most gentle Saviour, that the end of the commandment is love that cometh of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. For he that loveth thee his Lord God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, with all his strength, and his neighbour as himself, fulfilleth the whole law. For all the law and the prophets require no more of us than love, even to love thee our Lord God above all things, and our neighbour as ourself. Without this love, all that we do, seem it ever so praiseworthy in the sight of men, is abominable before thee. Yea, as thy blessed apostle saith, Though I spake with the tongues of men and angels, and yet had no love, I were even as a sounding brass or as a tinkling cymbal. And though I could prophesy, and understand all secrets, and all knowledge, yea, if I had all faith, so that I could move mountains out of their places, and yet have no love, I were nothing, and though I bestowed all my goods to feed the poor, and though I gave my body to be burned, and yet had no love, it profiteth me nothing. For by love are we known to be thy disciples, even as the devil's imps are known by hatred and maliciousness. And the love, O Lord, that thou requirest of us is no worldly or fleshly love, (for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, and whosoever will be a friend of the world, is made the enemy of God,) but godly, spiritual, sincere, true, and pure love, even such love as suffereth long, is courteous, envieth not, doeth not frowardly, swelleth not, dealeth not dishonestly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh not evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; suffereth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.

This godly love, this Christian charity, give thou unto us, O good Lord, that we may unfeignedly and with all our heart love thee our Lord God, who so dearly lovedst us, that thou gavest thyself for us, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet savour to God. Take away from us the love of worldly things, which though they appear ever so pleasant and beautiful, are notwithstanding mere vanity, and give us grace so to use this world as though we use it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away. Make us also to

abhor the filthy and vile pleasures of the corrupt flesh, and by no means to be entangled with the love of them, the end whereof is dishonour, shame, corruption, destruction, and damnation; and kindle our hearts so fervently with thy love, that nothing may delight and please us, but only thou, and whatsoever may make unto thy glory, and is agreeable unto thy blessed commandment; so that thou only, mayest be our love, our delight, our joy, our mirth, our solace. And whatsoever is without thee, and estranged from thy love, let it be counted of us more vain than vanity itself, and more filthy than the very dung. Grant also, that from this our love towards thee, there may issue out a vehement and burning love toward our neighbours, yea, toward our very enemies, that we may love them from the very heart, yea, even as ourselves, pray for them, give them good counsel, help them, defend them, succour them, provide for their necessities, and deal with them in all things as we wish to be dealt withal. O Lord God, thou art love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in thee, and thou in him; grant that in this world we may so dwell together through love—thou in us, by thy Holy Spirit, and we in thee by faith—that after our departure from this vale of misery, we may be placed with thee in thy heavenly mansion, and so continue with thee in glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer for a Godly Life.

It greatly grieveth us, O merciful Father and everlasting God, that we, through the grievous and continual assaults of our enemies, are not able to pass our years in this world with such purity of life as we ought, and as thou requirest of us. Verily we are on every part so besieged and compassed round about of our adversaries, that scarcely at any time we can be free from their pestiferous and deadly darts, or yet have so much respite as once to breathe toward true godliness. O most loving God, thou art our Father, and we thy children; convenient therefore is it, that we thy children represent and openly declare in our conversation, the manners of thee our Father. Thou art good, gentle, loving, charitable, merciful, patient, long-suffering, holy, righteous, faithful, &c. It therefore becomes us thy children, in our living to practise goodness, gentleness, love, charity, mercy, patience, long-suffering, holiness, righteousness, faith, &c. Thou hast given us an

example, that even as thou hast done, so we likewise should do. If we say we dwell in thee, we ought to walk as thou hast walked. For thou hast called us, not to uncleanness, but unto holiness. Thou hast delivered us from the power of our enemies, that we, being without fear, should serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. The blood of thy Son Jesus Christ hath cleansed us from all sin, not that we should continue in darkness, but rather walk in the light, as thou art in the light. Thy loving kindness hath appeared unto all men, not that we should follow ungodliness and worldly lusts, but that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Thou didst choose us in Christ, before the foundations of the world were laid, that we should be holy and without blame before thee through him. We are thy workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which thou ordainest afore that we should walk in them.

Forasmuch then as all the benefits which thou hast bestowed upon us, are given us unto this end, that we should walk worthy of thy kindness, represent thy manners in our conversation, mortify the flesh and the lusts thereof, have nothing to do with Satan or the world; but lead a good life, garnished full of good works, and in all points fashioned after the rule of thy blessed word; we most heartily pray thee to endue us with thy Holy Spirit, which may take away our stony heart, and give us a new, fleshy, and soft heart. Kill that old man in us which is corrupt through deceivable lusts, and fashion in us that new man which is made after thy image and likeness, in righteousness and true holiness. Suffer us not to give over ourselves again unto our old lusts and concupiscences, wherewith we were led when we knew not thee nor thy Son Christ; but even as thou who hast called us art holy, so likewise grant that we may be holy in all our conversation.

O merciful God, not the hearers of thy law, but the fulfillers of it shall be justified before thee. Neither shall every one that sayeth unto thee, Lord, Lord, enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of thee our Father which art in heaven. To confess thee with our mouth, and to deny thee with our deeds, worketh rather our damnation than salvation. For the true knowledge of thee consisteth not in talking but in walking, not in favouring but in following, not in loving but in living. To pro-

mise thee by mouth that we will work in thy vineyard, and yet to work not at all, declares us not to be thy sons. To brag of the justification of faith, and not to bring forth the fruits thereof; to glory in the merits of thy Son Christ, in his blood, death, and passion, and not to live worthy of his kindness; to profess thy holy gospel, and not to walk according to the doctrine thereof; to be baptized in thy name, and not to mortify our members which are of the earth, nor to walk in a new life; to be partakers of thy divine mysteries, and not to be made one spirit with thee, what availeth it? We are thy friends, if we do those things that thou commandest us. We are thy servants, if we be obedient to thy will. We are thy sons, if we honour and reverence thee according to thy word. We seek thy glory, if we attempt nothing whereby thou shouldest be dishonoured. Leading a life conformable to thy blessed will, we shall provoke the very enemies of thy truth to praise thee; but if contrariwise, thou shalt be evil spoken of. Grant therefore, we beseech thee, that our life may answer to our profession, and that the light of our good works may so shine before men, that they, seeing our godly conversation, may glorify thee our heavenly Father. Amen.

A Prayer against the Temptations of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh.

Albeit, O most mighty Captain, most valiant Warrior, and most triumphant Lord Christ Jesus, thou by thy death hast put down him that had lordship over death, that is to say, the devil, that thou mightest deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime in danger of bondage —and albeit thou hast spoiled rule and power, and made a show of them openly, and hast triumphed over them in thine own person, and by this means delivered us from the hands of our enemies, that we might serve thee all the days of our life, in such holiness and righteousness as are acceptable before thee; yet the devil, for the old malice which he hath borne against man from his first creation, (for through envy of the devil, death entered into the world,) goeth forth still to rage against us; and walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and if he were not restrained by thy godly puissance, he would surely swallow us up, so great is his tyranny, so mighty is his power. He prevailed against our first parents, yea, and

that in the state of their innocency and immortality. He afterward attempted others and prevailed, whereof some, notwithstanding, were the chosen vessels of mercy. Hereof getting courage unto himself, he feared not to assail thee with his subtle temptations. Oh! is it then to be thought that he will let us alone, so feeble, so weak, and ready at every moment to be overthrown? Thou thyself callest him the prince of this world, and thy holy apostle nameth him the god of this world. Strong must he needs be, and of no small might, whom thy holy word so termeth; strong indeed in comparison of us, but weak and of no force, being compared with thee. This prince, this god of the world, hath the reprobate and wicked already in his court at his commandment, and thou dost suffer him continually to war against thine elect and chosen people, not to destroy them, which he most of all wishes, but to exercise and try their faith, to prove their constancy, and in this their conflict to occasion them by hearty prayers to flee unto thy holy name, which is a strong tower and mighty fortress for so many as repair unto it; that they, getting aid at thy hand, may not only enter into battle with this their great and immortal enemy, but also, by the power of thy might, overcome him and put him to flight. And as thou hast given Satan this liberty to tempt, to exercise, prove, and try us, whether we be constant in thy faith and word or not, so doth he take thy proffer. And although thou sufferest him thus to do for our great profit and advantage, for we know that all things work for the best unto them that love God, even that we, of ourselves being weak, should have a glorious triumph and noble victory over him, through the mighty puissance of thee our grand Captain, yet hereof he takes occasion to seek our destruction. And that he may bring this to pass, besides the innumerable companies of hellish spirits, he takes unto himself two other our most cruel enemies, the world and the flesh. The one with his vain pleasures, the other with her carnal lusts, so compass us round about, that if thy present help were not, we must needs perish.

O loving Lord and most gentle Saviour, thou seest our weakness, misery, and no strength. Thou knowest again the valour, might, and power of our adversaries. Our strength is no more to be compared with their might, than the strength of little David with the mighty power of great Goliath. Our spear, our sword, our shield, will do

nothing in this behalf. Notwithstanding these, we do not despair. For although there be not so great strength in us, that we may be able to resist this great company that cometh against us, yet have we this one refuge and succour, even to lift up our eyes unto thee, and to say, Our help cometh from the Lord our God who made heaven and earth. If God be on our side, who can be against us? The battle, O Lord God, is thine; our faith therefore is, that thou wilt give our enemies into our hands. Thou taughtest us to pray that we may not be led into temptation, and hast promised us that thou wilt not suffer us to be tempted above our strength, but wilt in the midst of the temptation, make a way for us to escape. Thou art faithful, fulfil therefore thy promise. And forasmuch as thy good pleasure is, that we shall manfully fight with these our enemies, (for what is the life of man in this world but a continual warfare?) and no man is crowned, except he strive lawfully, we, with our very heart despairing of our own strength and courage, most humbly beseech thee to be our Captain, and valiantly to defend us against our enemies, that they may not prevail against us.

Make us strong in thee, O Lord, and in the power of thy might. Put thy holy armour upon us, that we may stand steadfast against the crafty assaults of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rule, against power, and against worldly rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things. For this cause, O most sweet Saviour, put upon us thy holy armour, that we may be able to resist in the evil day, and stand perfect in all things. Give us grace, therefore, to stand, and to gird our loins about with verity, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and shod with shoes prepared by the gospel of peace. But above all, grant that we may take unto us the shield of faith, wherewith we may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is thy blessed word. Grant also, that we, being thus godly armed, may, through thy puissance, might, and strength, not only enter battle with our enemies, but also valiantly fight with them, courageously put them to flight, and triumphantly carry away a glorious victory over them. So shall it come to pass that we, being valiant conquerors, through thy help, shall receive at thy hand, according to thy promise, manna to eat that is hid;

and a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. Lord, for thy mercies' sake, grant us these our petitions; so shall we praise and magnify thy blessed name for ever and ever. Amen.

A Prayer for remission of Sinners.

If we, wretched sinners, O Lord God, had not loving promises of thy tender mercy in the Holy Scriptures, for the comfort of our weak consciences and sorrowful hearts, we see none other remedy, so great and infinite are our sins, but that we must needs despair. But forasmuch as whatsoever things are written, are written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope, our sins, although ever so many and abominable, do not so much make us sorrowful, as thy loving-kindness and tender mercies make us glad. Our sins, we confess, are innumerable; but thy mercies are also infinite. Thou art that most gentle Lord who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn and live. Thou for repentance sake wilt not see the sins of men. Thou confessest that thou camest into this world to save sinners, to call, not the righteous, but sinners unto repentance, and to seek that which was lost. Thou callest unto thee all them that are diseased and laden with the heavy burden of sin, and promisest that thou wilt ease them. Yea, by the prophet thou sayest, If we will wash and make ourselves clean, put away our evil thoughts out of thy sight, cease from doing evil and violence, learn to do right, apply ourselves to equity, deliver the oppressed, help the fatherless to his right, and hear the widow's complaint, though our sins were as red as scarlet, yet shall they be made whiter than snow, and though they were like purple, yet shall they be made like white wool. Yea, thou sayest moreover, that for thy own sake, even for thy mercy and name's sake, thou wilt be good unto us, favour us, and so cast away all our sins behind thy back, that thou wilt never remember them more. O Lord, thou art the God who cannot lie, thou art the truth itself, thou art faithful in thy words, and holy in all thy works. For according to these thy loving promises, hast thou ever dealt with the children of men whensoever they repented and turned unto thee. When they forsook their sinful living and called upon thy holy name, thou forgavest all their sins and healedst all

their infirmities. Thou savedst their life from destruction, and crownedst them with mercy and loving-kindness. For thou, O Lord God, art full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering and of great goodness. Thou wilt not alway be chiding, neither wilt thou keep thine anger for ever. Neither wilt thou deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our wickedness. For look, how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth, so great is thy mercy toward them that fear thee; look, how wide the east is from the west, so far dost thou set our sins from us. Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so art thou merciful unto them that fear thee. For thou knowest whereof we are made, thou rememberest that we are but dust; that a man in his time is but as grass, and flourisheth as a flower of the field; for as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more. But thy merciful goodness, O Lord, endureth for ever and ever, upon them that fear thee. Of this thy loving-kindness and tender mercy, who at any time hath not tasted, if he sought it with all his heart? Forgavest thou not David both his adultery and murder, when he repented and confessed his sin? How oft didst thou call back the plagues of thy vengeance, when the children of Israel lamented their sins and turned unto thee!

How merciful didst thou show thyself to the Ninevites, when they repented and humbled themselves in thy sight! How lovingly spakest thou to that sinful woman in thy gospel, and forgavest her all her sins, because she repented and believed! Peter, thy disciple, although most cowardly denying thee, after that he had bitterly wept and lamented his sins, thou didst behold with thy merciful eye, and favourably receivedst him again into the number of thy holy apostles. One of them that died with thee, being both a thief and a murderer, after that he had called unto thee for grace, thou placedst in paradise and madest him partaker of thine eternal felicity. Many other notable examples of thy great mercies find we in the Holy Scriptures, which will not suffer us to despair of thy clemency and goodness, be our sins and wickednesses ever so many, but they rather do encourage us, boldly to come unto the throne of thy grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. O most gentle Saviour, thou art that most loving Shepherd, who diligently soughtest the wandering sheep, lovingly layedst it upon thy

shoulders, and tenderly broughtest it home again. Seek us who have so long run astray, lay us upon thy merciful shoulders, and bring us home again unto the company of thy faithful. Thou art that most merciful Samaritan, who beholding the miserable state of the wounded man with thy pitiful eye, came unto him, made his wounds clean, poured in wine and oil, bound them up, laid the sick man upon thy beast, and carried him unto the inn, and never left him till he was perfectly whole. O most loving Saviour, vouchsafe also, with thy merciful eye to look upon our wretched state, which without thy help must needs perish. Our wounds are deadly wounds, and cannot be healed of any, either in heaven or in earth, but of thee alone, who art the true Physician, and alone healest them that are contrite in heart. Our whole head is sick, and the heart is very heavy. From the sole of the foot unto the head, there is no whole part in all our body, but all are wounds, botches, sores, and stripes, which can neither be helped, bound up, mollified, nor eased with any ointment, except thou puttest to thy helping hand. Let it therefore please thee, of thy great goodness to make clean our wounds, to pour in the wine and oil of spiritual gladness, to bind them up, and never to leave us till thou hast made us perfectly whole, and hast brought us into thy heavenly kingdom. Heal thou us, O Lord, and we shall be healed; save thou us, and we shall be saved.

Thou art the most tender Father, who receivest home again with embracing arms that lost son who had wasted all his goods with riotous living. So soon as he returned unto thee, repented him of his disorders, confessed his sin, and humbled himself in thy sight, thou hadst compassion on him, and came and fell on his neck and kissed him. Thou didst command thy servants also to bring forth that best garment and put it on thy son, and to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. Thou gavest commandment also to fetch a fatted calf and to kill it, and saidst, Let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and now is found. Show this thy favour, O most gentle Father, to us thy children also, who have ungodly bestowed the godly and virtuous gifts which thou both friendly and liberally gavest unto us. This our prodigal and licentious living sorely grieveth us, and we are heartily sorry that we have so grievously offended thy fatherly goodness. Notwithstanding, according to

thine accustomed goodness, we most humbly beseech thee, for thy name's sake, to have mercy on us, to forgive us our sins, and to receive us again into thy favour. Take away from us all our beggarly rags, and put on us that new garment of innocency, that precious ring of faith wherewith we are married unto thee, and those most godly shoes of the evangelic peace, that we may walk from henceforth in the ways of thy holy commandments, and do that which is pleasant in thy sight. Give us grace so unfeignedly to repent and to amend our lives, that the angels of heaven may rejoice at our conversion; and so wash us from our sins more and more, that at the last we may be clean, and appear beautiful in thy heavenly Father's sight, through thee our only Saviour, who, with the same thy Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest one true and everlasting God, world without end. Amen.

A Prayer for a competent and necessary Living.

O heavenly Father, thy Son and our Lord taught us to ask our bodily food of thee, and all other things that are necessary for the preservation of this our mortal and corruptible body. For thou art that Lord who givest meat to the hungry. Thou feedest all thy creatures in due time. Thou openest thine hand and replenishest all living things with thy blessing. Thine eyes are upon them that fear thee, and upon such as trust in thy mercy, that thou mayest deliver their lives from death, and nourish them in the time of hunger. They that fear thee shall have no scarceness, neither shall they want any good thing that seek thee. Never was it seen that the righteous man, that is, he that liveth according to thy word, was forsaken, neither have his children begged their bread on the earth. How wonderfully didst thou feed thy servant Elias, when thou sent him meat twice in a day by the ravens! How marvellously didst thou increase the oil and meal of the widow of Sarepta, Elias' hostess! How didst thou provide for thy servant Daniel, when he was in prison for setting forth thy glory! How wonderfully didst thou feed the children of Israel, by sending them meat down from heaven by the space of forty years in the wilderness! The fowls of the air thou dost feed, which neither sow nor reap, nor yet carry into the barns. Thy Son also, (that we may depend on thy fatherly providence and not despair of a competent living,) fed many thousands with a few loaves of bread

and a little number of small fishes. He also at a marriage turned water into wine, to show that those who live according to thy blessed word, every one in his vocation, shall want no good thing. Thou art the very living God, who givest us abundantly all things to enjoy them. Thou art our Father, thou therefore wilt not suffer us thy children to perish for hunger. Thou art our Lord, and therefore wilt not suffer us thy servants to die for want of clothes. Thou feedest the heathen and the brute beasts; is it then to be thought that thou wilt leave us succourless, who believe in thee, call on thy holy name, and hang on thy fatherly providence? We, therefore, being thoroughly persuaded that all good things, pertaining either to the body or to the soul, come from thee alone; doubting also nothing of thy bounteous liberality and liberal bounty toward them that with strong faith depend on thy fatherly providence, are bound at this present to come unto thy divine Majesty, most humbly beseeching thee to work in us, through thy Holy Spirit, a mind content with what is sufficient, seeing that no man's life standeth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, seeing also that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world, and have here no continuing city, but seek one to come; again, seeing we brought nothing into the world, neither shall we carry any thing out of it. For naked came we out of our mother's womb, and naked shall we return to the earth again. Take away from us all superfluous worldly cares, and teach us to be content with food and raiment. Suffer us not, after the manner of the heathen, to be careful for worldly things, as though thou hadst no care for us; but teach us, first of all, to seek thy kingdom and the righteousness thereof, and so to look for all worldly and temporal things at thy merciful hand. O Lord, give us neither poverty nor riches, only grant thou us a necessary living, lest if we be full we deny thee, and say, What is the Lord? And lest we, being constrained through poverty, fall into stealing and forswear the name of the Lord our God. Lord, let it so come to pass for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A Prayer to be said before the Sermon.

Thy word, O Lord, is a lantern unto our feet, and a light to our pathways. For it showeth unto us evidently how we ought to walk, and turn neither on the right hand nor

on the left, but even that way which thou hast appointed, that we may live and please thee. Thy law also is a perfect and undefiled law, it turneth souls, and giveth wisdom even unto babes. Thy statutes are right and rejoice the heart, thy commandment is pure and giveth light unto the eyes. It is neither emplasture nor salve that healeth us, but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things. Through thy word, which thou hast left here among us, are we made clean; for it is thy power unto salvation to every one that believeth. To hear this thy word, which is sweeter than the honey or honeycomb, and more precious than gold, pearls, or precious stones, we are come hither at this present, O most merciful Father, desiring thee to send both to thy preacher and to us, thy Holy Spirit, that he may teach nothing but thy pure word and the glorious gospel of thy most dear Son; again, that we may diligently note and repose in our memory whatsoever shall be godly and truly spoken of him. And forasmuch as neither he that planteth nor he that watereth is any thing, but thou, O God, who givest the increase, we most entirely pray thee, that the seed of thy blessed word, which shall now be sown among us, may fall into our hearts as into a good ground, and by no means be choked up of thorns, nor dried up for want of moisture, nor yet be carried away of the birds of the air; but through the working of the Holy Ghost, so take root in our hearts, that it may bring forth plenty of good fruit, unto thy glory and the health of our souls. Amen.

A Thanksgiving after the Sermon.

We render unto thee, O heavenly Father, most hearty thanks for this spiritual and heavenly nourishment of thy blessed word, wherewith our souls are not only well refreshed at this present, but also our faith is strengthened, our love is kindled, and our consciences quieted. We most humbly beseech thee to give us grace, not only to be hearers of the word, but doers also of the same; not only to love, but also to live thy gospel; not only to favour, but also to follow thy godly doctrine; not only to profess, but also to practise thy blessed commandments; that whatsoever we outwardly hear, or inwardly believe, we may show forth the same in our conversation and living, unto the honour of thy holy name, the comfort of our Christian brethren, and the health of our souls. Amen.

A Prayer to be said before the receiving of the Holy Communion.

Thy love toward us, O most gentle Saviour, is so great and immeasurable, that it can by no means be expressed by mouth, nor sufficiently conceived in heart. For love to us, without any deserts on our behalf, freely and willingly, at thy heavenly Father's commandment, thou didst come down from the glorious seat of thy divine Majesty; thou didst take very flesh, and become perfect man, of the substance of the pure and undefiled virgin Mary, through the operation of the Holy Ghost; thou didst teach the will of thy heavenly Father, confirming the same with wonderful miracles, unto the great comfort of many who then lived, and unto the perfect establishment of our faith who live at this present. After thou hadst travailed in this world certain years, the time fore-appointed from everlasting of thy heavenly Father drawing nigh, that thou wouldest give thyself an oblation and sweet-smelling sacrifice to God the Father for the sins of the whole world, even so many as repent, believe, and amend; willing that so noble and worthy a benefit of our redemption should not be forgotten, nor fall out of remembrance, which is the only anchor of our salvation, and the only comfort of weak consciences; when thou hadst eaten the paschal lamb with thy disciples, according to the appointment of the law, thou didst take bread into thy hand, gavest thanks to thy heavenly Father, brakest it, and deliveredst it to thy disciples, saying, "Take ye, eat ye, this is my body, which is betrayed for you; do this in the remembrance of me."

Because the inestimable benefit of our redemption, brought to pass by the one and only oblation of thy blessed body, broken on the altar of the cross, should not be forgotten, thou brakest bread in the sight of thy disciples, and gavest it unto them, commanding them to eat it in remembrance of the breaking of thy body, which then was betrayed by thy traitorous disciple Judas, the son of perdition, and which the day following was unfeignedly broken on the cross for our ransom, deliverance, and salvation. Here didst thou appoint the breaking of the bread among the faithful, gathered together for the purpose, a worthy and blessed memorial of thy body breaking. And because the breaking of thy body should be the better remembered,

thou didst ennoble the bread with the name of thy body, when, notwithstanding, it was only the figure, sign, token, and memorial of thy holy body. In like manner, when supper was done, thou didst take the cup into thy hand, gavest thanks to thy heavenly Father, and deliveredst it to thy disciples, saying, "Drink of this, all ye. For this is my blood of the new testament, (covenant or bargain) which shall be shed for many, unto the remission of sins. This do, as often as ye drink it, in the remembrance of me." As by the breaking of thy blessed body our ransom is perfectly paid, so by the shedding of thy precious blood are all our sins, even unto the uttermost, washed away.

Therefore, as by the breaking of the bread thou wouldest that the breaking of thy body and the benefits gotten by it should be remembered among the faithful; so to the end that the shedding of thy blood and the merits thereof should not be forgotten, thou gavest them the cup of wine to drink, commanding them, that so oft as they or any of the faithful, be gathered together for that purpose, to drink of the cup, they should remember thy death and the shedding of thy precious blood; as thy holy apostle saith, As oft as ye shall eat this bread and drink of the cup, ye shall show the Lord's death till he come. And as thou didst ennoble the bread with the name of thy body, being but the figure of thy body, because the breaking of thy body should the better be remembered; so likewise here dost thou garnish and nobly set forth the wine, naming it thy blood, when, notwithstanding, it only represents and preaches unto us the shedding of thy blood, because it should be the more deeply graven and the better retained in our minds.

O most merciful Redeemer and gentle Saviour, we are come together at this present to celebrate the memorial of thy blessed and glorious passion, and to eat and drink this bread and wine, in the remembrance of thy blessed body-breaking, and thy precious blood-shedding, most humbly and from the very heart beseeching thee to give us grace worthily to eat this bread and drink of this cup, lest by the unworthy receiving of them we be guilty of thy body and blood, and so eat and drink our own damnation. And that we may come the more worthily unto this thy table, grant, we most entirely pray thee, that we may so earnestly be at defiance with all sins, and so inwardly be ashamed that we at any time have so grievously offended thy divine Majesty, by attempting any thing that is not agreeable to thy

good pleasure, that from henceforth we may not only loath, detest, and abhor whatever is displeasing unto thee, but also embrace and lay hand on that which is good and acceptable in thy sight. Forgive us all our sins, and give us grace, even with our whole heart, to love all men, yea, our very enemies; and not only to forgive all such as have offended us, but also to be ready at all times, to do for them whatsoever good or pleasure we are able. And that we may be the more welcome unto thee, and be found meet and worthy guests to sit at this thy table, and to eat of these thy blessed gifts, that our souls may be well comforted, nourished, fed, and made joyful by the worthy receiving of them, clothe us, we pray thee, with that wedding-garment, even true and lively faith, wherewith our hearts are purified, wherewith we are married unto thee and made one flesh and one blood with thee; wherewith also we are justified and counted righteous in thy sight. And grant that through the same faith we earnestly set the eyes of our minds on these thy most sweet and loving promises, My body shall be broken for you; my blood shall be shed for you. And this without any doubting for remission of all our sins at thy heavenly Father's hand, according to thy most gentle promises, yea, and that not for our good deeds or merits, which in this behalf are none, but for the worthiness of thy blessed passion, for the dignity of thy precious blood, and for the only and alone sacrifice of thy holy body. For that, O Lord, is the salve which healeth our souls. That is the medicine which comforteth our weak and troubled consciences. That is the living bread; whosoever eateth of that bread shall never hunger, but live for ever. That is the jewel of joy which maketh our sorrowful hearts rejoice. That is the mighty bulwark, the strong defence, the sure fortress, that preserveth and keepeth us harmless against Satan, sin, death, hell, desperation, and all the infernal powers.

To come to the table, to be present at the supper, to hear and see what is there done, yea, and to receive the holy mysteries of thy body and blood there set forth unto us, profit us nothing at all if we faithfully believe not that thy body was broken, and thy blood shed, for our sins, and that by the alone oblation thereof, done once for all, our sins are forgiven us, thy heavenly Father reconciled unto us, his wrath stirred up through sin against us is pacified,

quietness of conscience and everlasting life are given us; but it rather turneth to our damnation, because we eat of this bread and drink of this cup unworthily, and shall with that hypocrite who presumed to come unto the marriage, not having the wedding garment, be bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, where weeping and gnashing of teeth shall be. Therefore, we most humbly beseech thee to give us grace, according to thy holy apostle's counsel, diligently to prove, try, and examine ourselves, whether such repentance, such faith, such love, such disposition towards all godliness, be found in us, or not, as thou dost require of them who will come worthily and with fruit unto thy table. And forasmuch as it is thy gift to repent heartily, to believe truly, to love unfeignedly, and to be disposed earnestly to embrace true godliness, and to go forward in the same, from virtue to virtue unto the end; grant, we most entirely pray thee, we may so repent, that the fruits of repentance may be found in us; so believe, that we may acknowledge thee our alone Saviour; so love, that all our affection may be set on thee alone; and so embrace true godliness that our whole life may be a clear mirror of all virtue and goodness. So shall we, through thy mercy, be found worthy guests of this thy table, and receive these holy mysteries unto the salvation of our souls; yea, so shall we be well assured of the remission and forgiveness of all our sins, by the breaking of thy blessed body, and the shedding of thy precious blood; our consciences shall be quiet, our hearts shall be filled with all true and spiritual joy; we shall triumph over Satan, sin, death, hell, and desperation; we shall be partakers of all the fruits and merits of thy blessed passion, and be made one body with thee, and fellow-heirs of everlasting glory. O Lord God, let it so come to pass for the honour of thy name. Amen.

A Thanksgiving after the receiving of the Communion.

We thank thee, O heavenly Father, for the blessed passion and glorious death of thy dearly-beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; by whom, and by whose holy wounds, we faithfully believe and are assuredly persuaded that thy wrath is not only pacified towards us, but that thou also art now become our most merciful Father, and hast freely forgiven us all our sins, restored unto us

thy heavenly grace, and made us sons and heirs of thine eternal glory. And because we should not doubt of thy fatherly goodness towards us, set forth in the death of thy Son, the same thy Son Christ Jesus our Lord hath left unto us not only his holy word, but also a blessed memorial of his death and passion, set forth in the holy bread and holy wine which we at this present have received, both for the remembrance of the breaking of his blessed body and the shedding of his most precious blood, and also for the quietness of our conscience, and for the assurance of the remission of our sins through faith. We beseech thee, O heavenly Father, that we be never unmindful of this thy exceeding great kindness, nor unthankful for thy manifold and unspeakable mercies declared unto us in the glorious death of thy well-beloved Son; but so work thou in us through thy Holy Spirit, that we may be made worthy members of that body, whereof thy Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ is the Head. And grant that we may so faithfully believe in thee, and so fervently love one another, always living in thy fear, and in the obedience of thy holy law and blessed will, that we, being fruitful in all godly and Christian works, may train our life according to thy good pleasure in this transitory world, and after this frail and short life obtain the true and immortal life, where thou, with thy dearly-beloved Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, that most sweet Comforter, livest and reignest one true God, in all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

A short Prayer to be said at the receiving of the mystery of Christ's body in the holy Communion.

O heavenly and blessed Father, I render unto thee most hearty thanks for all thy benefits which thou hast showed unto me, most wretched sinner, but especially for that most sweet-smelling sacrifice, which thy only begotten Son offered unto thee on the altar of the cross, by giving his most pure and undefiled body unto the death, for the redemption of mankind; in remembrance whereof, according to thy well-beloved Son's ordinance, I now receive this holy bread, most entirely beseeching thee that I may both be partaker of the merits of thy dear Son's body-breaking, and also lead a life worthy of so great a benefit, unto the glory of thy name. Amen.

A Prayer to be said at the receiving of the mystery of Christ's blood in the holy Communion.

O blessed and mereiful Father, thy love toward me, sinful creature, is so exeeeding great and unspeakable, that I cannot but give unto thee most humble thanks, namely, for the shedding of the most precious blood of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, by the virtue whereof, thy wrath stirred up against me, wretched sinner, is paeified, my ransom is paid, the law is fulfilled, my enemies are overcome and put to flight. In remembranee of this so noble a victory, and of so great a benefit, I am eome unto this thy table, O merciful Father, to drink of this eup; desiring thee, that as my outward man is eomforted by the drinking of this wine, so likewise my inward man may be eomforted and made strong, by true faith in the preeious blood of thy most dearly-beloved Son. O Lord, and my heavenly Father, give me thy Holy Spirit, whieh may so rule and govern my heart, that I may never be unthankful, nor forgetful of this thine exeeeding great kindness, but so train my life aeeording to thy blessed will, that whatsoever I do, speak, or think, may be unto the glory of thy blessed name, and the health of my soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer against Pride.

O most loving and gentle Saviour, the only begotten Son of the eternal and living God, thou commandest all men that will eome unto thee and be thy seholars, to learn of thee to be meek, humble, and lowly in heart, to be poor in spirit, not to be puffed up with arrogancy, pride, ambition, and vain glory. For thou seatterest them that are proud in the imagination of their hearts. Thou puttest down the mighty from their seats, and exaltest them of low degree. Thou resistest the proud, and givest graee to the humble. Thou throwest down the haughty minded, and exaltest the meek spirited. Thou so greatly abhorrest pride, that thou bringest also the proud to nought, and makest the memorial of them to eease from out of the earth. For pride is the original of all sin; whoso taketh hold thereof shall be filled with eursings, and at the last it shall overthrow him. O Lord, what is to be found in us, being our own, that may make us to glory in ourselves and to be proud? As concerning our body, what

is it but earth, ashes, dust, and dung? As for the beauty and favour of it, oh how deceitful and vain it is! And as for the strength thereof, how shortly doth a little fever make the most mighty the most weak! Who then will be proud of so vile a carcase? As touching our soul, if it be not regenerated by thy Holy Spirit, what other thing is it but the bond-slave of Satan and sin? If any thing we have is good (for all naughtiness cometh of ourselves) it is thy gift. If we have received it, why do we glory in ourselves, as though we had not received it? May it please thee, therefore, who art the mirror of true humility and giver of all virtue, to grave in our hearts the true knowledge of ourselves, that we may both willingly and unfeignedly confess whatsoever goodness we have to be thy gift, not so to glory in ourselves, but to give unto thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy gifts, ever walking before thee with all submission and lowliness of mind, that thou mayest exalt us when the time cometh. Suffer us not to be high-minded, but to make ourselves equal to them of the lower sort; and give us that humility and lowliness of heart, that mortifieth and killeth in us all love of ourselves, all pride and arrogancy, that our whole glory and rejoicing may only be in thee our Lord and Saviour, to whom be all honour for evermore. Amen.

A Prayer against Slandering and Backbiting.

The tongue, O Lord, is a member which thou hast given almost generally to all living creatures, but speech hast thou reserved only for man, yea, and that unto this end, that he should set forth thy praise and glory, magnify thy blessed name, advance thy holy religion, be ever telling of thy wondrous works, and always speaking that which may make unto thy glory, and unto the profit of our Christian brethren. The tongue rightly used is the organ of the Holy Ghost. An innocent and righteous tongue is a noble treasure, a tree of life, a honeycomb, a refreshing of the mind, and health of the bones, a mouth of understanding is more worth than gold, than many precious stones and costly jewels. But this gift of speech, O blessed Lord, is now greatly abused, both unto thy dishonour and the unquietness of thy people. For whereas thou by thy dearly-beloved Son, gavest a general commandment that we should bless them that curse us, it is now come to pass that they

whom we bless, curse us; whom we speak well of, they backbite us; whom we exhort, admonish, and teach good things, they deface, slander, and blaspheme us; whose wealth and health we seek, they, contrariwise, seek our destruction. O Lord, their mouth is full of cursed speaking, and their tongue painteth forth deceit. They sit and speak against their brethren, and slander even their very well wishers. Their tongue imagineth wickedness, and with lies it cutteth like a sharp razor. They love to speak all words that may do hurt. With their tongue they bless thee, and with the same tongue they curse us, who are made after thy similitude, image, and likeness; so that out of one mouth proceed cursing and blessing. But with such blessings, O Lord, thou art not delighted. But what marvel is it, O heavenly Father, though backbiting and slandering be used in these our days? In what age hath the slanderous and backbiting tongue ceased from its slandering and backbiting? Who of thy well-beloved servants escaped from its poisonous and venomous darts? Was not thy hearty-beloved servant David the king and prophet, slandered of the wicked and blasphemous traitor Shimei, and called a blood-shedder and a man of Belial? Was not the holy prophet Elias reported to be a seditious person, and a disquieter of the commonweal of Israel? Was not thy only begotten Son called a teacher of new learning, a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of harlots and publicans, a Samaritan, a deceiver of the people, a madman, and one possessed with a devil? Were not thy blessed apostles also called drunkards, seditious persons, vain prattlers, tidings-bringers of new devils, and teachers of strange doctrine? Was not Joseph reported to be a person of dishonest living, and yet, notwithstanding, none more honest, none more godly? Who, being godly bent and virtuously disposed, hath at any time escaped slanderous and backbiting tongues? O Lord, that member which thou madest to be an instrument of the Holy Ghost, is now become in many people an instrument of the devil, a fire, and a world of wickedness. For it is so set among our members that it defileth the whole body, and setteth a-fire all that we have of nature, and is itself set a-fire even of hell. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

We beseech thee, therefore, for thy mercy's sake, O most merciful God, to deliver us from unrighteous lips and from deceitful tongues, and to give us grace so to walk in all

our conversation and living, that our adversaries may be ashamed to slander and to speak evil of us. Grant also that they who hitherto have abused their tongues by backbiting, slandering, and defaming, may from henceforth speak with new tongues, praise thee and thy blessed name, talk of thy Holy Scriptures, meditate on them day and night, bless their Christian brethren, and speak well of all men, yea, of their very enemies, that so many of us as praise thy holy name may, with one mind and with one mouth, glorify thee our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for the avoiding of all kinds of Sin.

Ah Lord, that most puissant God, we in baptism giving over ourselves unto thee and unto thy holy religion, protested openly, in the face of thy holy congregation, to forsake Satan, with all his pomps and works, to renounce the world and all the vain pleasures thereof, to mortify the flesh and all the lusts of it, and from henceforth to die unto sin, to live unto righteousness and to lead a new life. This our covenant made with thee, O Lord God, we keep not, but too much wretchedly we break it and transgress thy holy commandment. Instead of our service due unto thee, we serve Satan. Leaving the fulfilling of thy commandments, we obey our own will. The world and the flesh so rage and reign in us, that we can scarcely breathe towards any godliness. By mouth we profess thee, but with our deeds we deny thee. We promise to work in thy vineyard, but we loiter and work not. In name we are Christians, but in deed we are Satan's bondmen, the world's slaves, and the most vile servants and drudges to the flesh. Ah Lord! very wretched is our state, and except thou shortly helpest, we are like utterly to perish, so greatly have the raging floods of all kinds of sin burst in, prevailed, and almost overwhelmed us. O most gentle Saviour, we have a will, such as it is, to do good, but we find no power nor strength in ourselves to perform it. That good thing which we would, we do not, but the evil do we, which we would not. For we know that in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing. No marvel, for we are by nature the children of wrath. We are begotten, conceived, and born in sin. Our senses, understandings, and devices are evil, even from our young age upward. Our heart is unclean, wicked, froward, ignorant, and unsearchable. We are not able

to think a good thought of ourselves. We are unprofitable servants, hypocrites, flesh, and all that is nought. Yea, we are the very bond-slaves of sin. For every one that committeth sin is the servant of sin. O most sweet Saviour, help us for the glory of thy name. Thou camest down from the right hand of thy Father unto this vale of misery, to save that which was lost. Save us therefore, good Lord, who wander abroad like sheep destitute of a shepherd. Suffer not thy blessed body to be broken, and thy precious blood to be shed for us in vain. Thou by thy death didst valiantly conquer him that had the power of death. Deliver us, therefore, from his raging tyranny, and make us thy faithful and obedient servants. Suffer us not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world, seeing that all that is in the world, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, is not of thee, O Father, but of the world. And the world vanisheth away and the lust thereof, but he that fulfilleth the will of God abideth for ever.

Suffer us not to be overcome with the boiling concupiscences of the flesh, which ever lusteth against the Spirit, and is not obedient to the law of God, neither can be; but give us grace to crucify and to kill the flesh, with the appetites and lusts thereof, that we may live and walk in the Spirit, and become new creatures. Let not sin reign in our mortal bodies, that we should thereunto obey in the lusts of it. Neither suffer thou us to give our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but to give ourselves unto God, as they that are alive from death, and to give our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. And as heretofore we gave our members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity, from iniquity to iniquity, so let us now from henceforth give our members servants unto righteousness, that we may be sanctified. Kill in us the deeds of the flesh, which are these—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, zeal, wrath, strife, sedition, sects, envying, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like; and plant in us the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.

As concerning the conversation in times past, give us grace to lay away from us that old man, which is corrupt through the deceivable lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to put on that new man, which,

after the image of God, is shapen in righteousness and true holiness. Suffer us not to lie, but to speak every man truth to his neighbour, forasmuch as we are members one of another. Suffer us not so to be angry that we sin. Let not the sun go down upon our wrath, neither let us give place unto the backbiter. Grant that he who before hath stolen, may from henceforth steal no more, but rather labour with his hands some good thing, that he may have to give unto him that needeth. Let no filthy communication proceed out of our mouth, but that which is good to edify withal when need is, that it may have favour with the hearers. Let all bitterness, fierceness, and wrath, all roaring and cursed speaking, be put away from us, with all maliciousness. Make us courteous one to another, and merciful, forgiving one another, even as God for thy sake forgave us. As for fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among us, as it becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not comely, but rather giving of thanks. Put upon us tender mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. But above all these things put upon us love, which is the bond of perfection, and grant that the peace of God may evermore rule in our hearts, and that we be thankful for all thy benefits.

Finally, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things pertain to love, whatsoever things are of honest report, if there be any virtuous thing, if there be any laudable thing, grant that we may have those same in our mind, and practise them in our conversation and living; that whatsoever we breathe, think, speak, or do, all things may be done unto the honour, glory, and praise, of thy name, who livest and reignest with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, true, living, and everlasting God, world without end. Amen.

A Thanksgiving unto God for sending his Son into this world to die for our sins.

Whithersoever we turn our eyes, O most loving and heavenly Father, the bottomless seas of thine unspeakable goodness towards mankind plenteously flow in, and lively offer themselves unto us to behold and to wonder at. After the fall of the sinful angels, what an exceeding great

kindness was this, to make man after thy similitude, image, and likeness, that he and his posterity might furnish and occupy those places in thy glorious kingdom, which the proud and disobedient angels lost by their proud disobedience and disobedient pride. Not only to make man, but also to provide aforehand all things necessary for him; yea, to make him lord and ruler of all things contained in the earth under thee his Lord God! Oh what a wonderful loving kindness was this! Again, to preserve, keep, and defend man, to watch continually over him, whether he wake or sleep, as the diligent and careful shepherd watcheth over his flock, that no evil befal man; and to direct his thoughts, counsels, and devices unto the best, never leaving him, till thou hast brought him into thy heavenly kingdom. O who is able with tongue to express, or with heart to think, this thy hearty good will toward man! These benefits, O most merciful Father, are exceeding great tokens of thy dear love toward mankind; but the gift of thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, whom thou gavest unto us to be our Saviour, our Redeemer, our peace-maker, our wisdom, our sanctification, and our righteousness, is the most excellent gift and the most precious treasure. A child to be born for our sakes! The Son of the most high God to be given us for a New Year's Gift, to be our own for ever! Oh love passing all love! O kindness rather to be marvelled at, than by mouth to be uttered. God the Father so dearly to love the world, that he should give his only begotten Son, that every one that believeth in him may not perish, but have everlasting life! God the Father to send his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him should be saved! God the Father not to spare his own Son, but to deliver him even unto death for us all, yea, and with him even to give us all things! O most gentle kindness, exceeding all love and kindness! Wonderfully, O most loving Father, doth this set forth thy hearty love toward us, that when we were yet ungodly and wicked sinners, thou gavest thy Son to die for our sins. He was wounded for our offences, and smitten for our wickedness. The pain of our punishment thou layedst upon him, and with his stripes were we healed. Through him, O Lord, didst thou pardon all our sins. It was thy good pleasure to smite him with infirmity, that when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he might see long lasting seed. For he is thy righteous servant,

who with his wisdom doth justify and deliver the multitude, for he hath borne away our sins. In his name, and in none other under heaven, doth our salvation consist. By him are we at peace with thee our Lord God. By him have we redemption through his blood, even remission of our sins. By him are we delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into thy heavenly kingdom. By him hast thou reconciled all things unto thyself. By him hast thou set at peace, through the blood of his cross, both things in heaven, and things on earth. By him hast thou quickened us, and forgiven us all our trespasses. He hath put out the hand-writing that was against us, contained in the written law. Yea, he hath taken that hand-writing out of the way, and hath fastened it to his cross; and hath spoiled rule and power, and hath made a show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them in his own person.

He is the Seed of the woman that treadeth down Satan's head. He is that Seed in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. He is that Lord who alone hath trodden the wine-press, neither was there any at all that helped him. He is that Saviour who saveth his people from their sins. He is that thy well-beloved Son, for whose sake thou art well pleased with man. He is that Bread of life which came down from heaven; if any eat of that bread, he shall live for ever. He is that good Shepherd who gave his life for his sheep. He is the resurrection and the life; whoso believeth on him, although he were dead, shall live, and every one that liveth and believeth in him shall never die. He is that mighty Prince that hath overcome the world. He is the perfect fulfilling of the law, to justify all that believe. He hath delivered us from the curse of the law, when he was made a curse for us. He, in his own person hath purged our sins. He, through death, hath put down him that had rule over death, that is to say, the devil, and hath made us free from the danger of bondage. He, with one offering of his blessed body, hath made perfect for ever them that are sanctified. He, now in the end of the world, hath appeared, once for all, to put sin to flight, by the offering up of himself. He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto thee, God his Father. Inestimable are the treasures, and infinite are the pleasures which we receive of thee, through this thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord and

Saviour. And this thy well-beloved and only begotten Son, with all his, hast thou given unto us, so that he and all that he hath is ours, and we may through thy gift justly claim it to be our own. For this thy fatherly love and unspeakable kindness in giving thy Son unto death for our sake, and for all thy other benefits which we have received at thy merciful hand through him, we give thee most hearty thanks, desiring thee that we never commit any thing, in thought, word, or deed, that may offend thy divine Majesty; but, calling to remembrance, that we are not redeemed with corruptible silver and gold from our conversation, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb undefiled and without spot, we may live worthy of this thy kindness, and show ourselves obedient children to thee, our heavenly Father; not fashioning ourselves any more unto our old lusts of ignorance; but as thou, who hast called us, art holy, even so in like manner may we be holy in all our conversation and living, unto the glory of thy blessed name. Amen.

A Thanksgiving unto God for all his Benefits.

We most heartily thank thee, O Lord God our heavenly Father, for thy manifold and inestimable benefits which thou hast given unto us, both for our body and soul, yea, and freely, even of thine own goodness without our desert. We thank thee, that it hath pleased thee of thy great mercy, first to create and make us according to thine own image and likeness, and to place us in joyful paradise, where we should have continually remained in a blessed and quiet state, if, through the subtle and deceitful suggestions of Satan our old enemy, we had not transgressed thy holy commandments. We thank thee also, O most gentle Father, for thy loving kindness, which thou showedst unto us, when we all were perished and lost through the sin of our first Father, Adam. For when thou mightest justly have condemned us, and cast us into perpetual damnation, thou, like a father of singular great love, hadst pity on us, and savedst us by the death and passion of thy well-beloved Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all our sins, and paid a sufficient price by his precious blood for all the wickedness that we at any time heretofore have committed, or hereafter shall commit, through our frailty or weakness, so that we repent, believe, and amend. Neither wast thou thus contented

that he should only die for our sins, but thou also didst raise him up again for our justification, and to make us righteous in thy sight. Moreover, after that he had showed himself unfeignedly alive to his apostles, by manifest and evident tokens, certain days after his resurrection, through the power of his Godhead, he ascended up into heaven, perfect God, and perfect man; where he now sitteth on thy right hand, and maketh intercession for us, being our only Mediator and Advocate. From thence we look for him to come again at the day of judgment, not as a cruel judge to condemn and cast us away, but as a most loving Lord and gentle Saviour, to carry us with him into everlasting glory; there, world without end, to remain in such joys as eye hath not seen nor hath ear heard, nor yet is any heart able to think. For these thy most bounteous gifts, and for all thy other benefits, which thou daily givest unto us of thy great mercy, both for our body and soul, we most humbly thank thee, most gentle and merciful Father, beseeching thee that thou wilt give us grace through thy Holy Spirit not to be unthankful, but to walk worthy of this thy kindness, and so to behave ourselves all our life time in this wretched world, according to thy holy will, that at the last day we may be found in the number of them to whom the only begotten Son shall say, Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Lord let it so come to pass.

A Prayer to be said for all such as lie at the point of Death.

O most loving Saviour and gentle Redeemer, who camest into this world to call sinners unto repentance, and to seek that which was lost, thou seest in what case this our brother lieth here, visited with thy merciful hand; altogether weak, feeble, sick, and ready to yield up his soul into thy holy hands. O look upon him, most gentle Saviour, with thy merciful eye, pity him, and be favourable unto him. He is thy workmanship, despise not therefore the work of thine own hands. Thou sufferedst thy blessed body and thy precious blood to be shed for his sins, and to bring him unto the glory of thy heavenly Father, let it not therefore come to pass that thou shouldest suffer so great pains for him in vain. He was baptized in thy name, and gave himself

wholly to be thy servant, forsaking the devil, the world, and the flesh; confess him therefore before thy heavenly Father, and his blessed angels, to be thy servant. His sins, we confess are great, for who is able to say, My house is clean, and I am free from sin; but thy mercies, O Lord, are much greater: and thou camest not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance. To them that are diseased and overladen with the burden of sin, dost thou promise ease. Thou art that God who willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live. Thou art the Saviour who wishest all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of thy truth. Withdraw not therefore thy mercy from him because of his sins, but rather lay upon him thy saving health, that thou mayest show thyself towards him a Saviour. What greater praise can there be to a physician, than to heal the sick? Neither can there be a greater glory to thee, being a Saviour, than to save sinners. Save him therefore, O Lord, for thy name's sake. Again, let the law be no corrosive to his conscience, but rather give him grace, even in this extreme agony and conflict of death, to be fully persuaded that thou by thy death hast taken away all his sins, fulfilled the law for him, and by this means delivered him from the curse of the law, and paid his ransom; that he, thus being fully persuaded, may have a quiet heart, a free conscience, and a glad will to forsake this wretched world, and to go unto his Lord God. Moreover, thou hast conquered him that had rule of death, even Satan; suffer him not therefore to exercise his tyranny upon this our sick brother, nor to disquiet his conscience with the terrors of sin and pains of hell. Let not Satan or his infernal army tempt him further than he is able to bear, but evermore give him grace, even unto his last breath, valiantly to fight against the devil with a strong faith in thy precious blood, that he may fight a good fight, and finish his course with joy, unto the glory of thy name, and the health of his soul. O Lord, so work in him by thy Holy Spirit, that he, with all his heart, may contemn and despise all worldly things, and set his mind wholly upon heavenly things, hoping for them with a strong and undoubted faith. Again, let it not grieve him, O sweet Saviour, to be loosened from this vile and wretched carcase, which is now so full of sorrow, trouble, anguish, sickness, and pain, but rather let him have a bent and ready will, through thy goodness, to put it off. Yea, and

that with this faith, that he, at the last day, shall receive it again in a much better state than it is now, or ever was from the day of his birth; even a body incorruptible, immortal, and like to thy glorious body. Let his whole heart and mind be set only upon thee. Let the remembrance of the joys of heaven be so fervent in his breast, that he may both patiently and thankfully take his death, and ever wish to be with thee in glory. And when the time cometh that he shall give over to nature, and depart from this miserable world, vouchsafe, we most humbly beseech thee, O Lord Jesus, to take his soul into thy hands, and to place it among the glorious company of thy holy angels and blessed saints, and to keep it unto that most joyful day of the general resurrection, that both his body and soul, through thine almighty power, being knit again together at that day, he may for ever and ever enjoy thy glorious kingdom, and sing perpetual praises to thy blessed name. Amen.

A Thanksgiving unto God for the departure of the Faithful out of this World.

O most loving Father, how can we render unto thee sufficient thanks for thine inestimable goodness toward thy faithful servants, whom thou, calling out of this wretched world, vouchsafest to place in thy heavenly kingdom among the glorious company of thy holy angels and blessed saints? Oh full precious is the death of the faithful in thy sight! Blessed are the dead who die in thee, O Lord! For they are at rest from their painful travails and labours. The souls of the righteous are in thy hand, O God, and the pain of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they appear to die, but they are in peace. They shine as the sparks that run through the dry reed bush. They glister as the shining of heaven. They are as the stars, world without end. They are as angels of God. They are clad with white garments, and have golden crowns upon their heads. They do service day and night before the glorious throne of thy divine majesty. They neither hunger nor thirst any more; neither doth the sun or any heat fall upon them, for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, governeth them, and leadeth them unto the living fountains of waters. They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. They have such joys, as eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, neither is there any

heart able to think them. Infinite and unspeakable are the treasures, O Lord, which thou hast laid up for them who die in the faith. For these thy fatherly benefits towards the souls of the faithful; and for that it hath pleased thee to call our Christian brethren and sisters from this vale of misery unto thy heavenly kingdom, we give unto thee most hearty thanks; humbly beseeching thee that thou wilt take like care of us, and so govern us with thy Holy Spirit, both in sickness and in health, that we may live a good and godly life in this present world, and whensoever it shall be thy good pleasure to call us hence, we may with strong faith in thee, and in thy Son Christ Jesus our Lord, commend both our bodies and souls into thy merciful hands, and through thy goodness be placed in thy glorious kingdom, among thy faithful chosen people, and so for ever and ever praise and magnify thee our heavenly Father; to whom, with thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, the most sweet Comforter, be all glory and honour, world without end. Amen.

THE POMANDER OF PRAYER.

Another of Becon's tracts is entitled "The Pomander of Prayer," (a pomander was a ball made up of several sorts of perfumes.) It contains forty short prayers suitable for different stations and circumstances of life. A specimen may be given.

For the true Knowledge of Ourselves.

It is written in thy holy gospel, most loving Saviour, that thou camest into this world, not to call the righteous, that is, such as justify themselves, but sinners, unto repentance. Suffer me not therefore, O Lord, to be of the number of those who thus justify themselves, who, boasting their own righteousness, their own works and merits, despise the righteousness that cometh by faith, which alone is allowable before thee. Give me grace to know and to acknowledge myself, as I am, even the son of wrath by nature, a wretched sinner, and an unprofitable servant, and wholly to depend on thy merciful goodness with strong and unshaken faith, that in this world thou mayest continually call me unto true repentance, seeing I continually sin, and in the world to come bring me unto everlasting glory. Amen.

SELECTIONS

FROM

THE SICK MAN'S SALVE,

WHEREIN FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS MAY LEARN BOTH HOW TO BEHAVE THEMSELVES PATIENTLY AND THANKFULLY IN TIME OF SICKNESS, AND ALSO VIRTUOUSLY TO DISPOSE THEIR TEMPORAL GOODS, AND FINALLY TO PREPARE THEMSELVES GLADLY AND GODLILY TO DIE.

MADE

BY THOMAS BECON.

A. D. 1550.

Come unto me all ye that are sick and diseased, and I will comfort you.—Matt. xi.

The object and design of the author is stated in the following extract from the epistle dedicatory, "In this treatise, intitled 'The Sick Man's Salve,' my mind is to show unto the faithful Christians, how they ought to make provision for their latter end, that they may depart in the faith of Christ, and be of the number of those of whom it is written, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Again: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. For, what should it profit a man to win all the world, if at the last he loseth his soul? (Psal. xcvi. Matt. xvi.) Therefore in this my work I have declared, first of all, how the faithful Christians ought to behave themselves patiently and thankfully in the time of sickness. Secondly, how they should virtuously dispose their temporal goods. Thirdly, after what manner they ought to prepare themselves gladly and godlily to die. Finally, I have interlaced many comfortable exhortations unto the sick, and divers godly and necessary prayers; some to be said of them that are sick, and some of others, for such as are diseased."

The Sick Man's Salve was one of the most popular of Becon's writings; several editions were printed during the sixteenth century, and even in 1612 it was among the publications of the Stationers' company, which shows there must have been a considerable demand for the work. It is in the form of a dialogue between Philemon, Eusebius, Theophilus, Christopher, and Epaphroditus the sick man, and may be considered as consisting of three parts. In the first, Philemon and his friends go to see the sick man, whom they find in much pain and uneasiness of mind, and expressing himself with impatience. They explain to him that sickness is the visitation of God, and by referring to many examples and precepts of Scripture, encourage him to look to the Lord with confidence in his mercy, having humbled himself before Him. In the second part, is pointed out the duty of a Christian when in dangerous sickness,—giving the necessary directions concerning his affairs, and exhorting his family to discharge the duties of their several stations, with advice for their future conduct; the sick man also makes a clear profession of his faith. The third part exhibits the Christian in his last hours, assaulted by the enemy of souls, but supported in and through his blessed Lord and Saviour, and departing in peace, having a foretaste of the joys prepared for him.

This excellent tract is too long to be included in the present volume, and would suffer from much abridgment; the selections here given are from the latter portion of the work, and contain the profession of faith and the last hours of the dying believer. Becon's design in compiling this tract, evidently was not so much to give an interesting narrative, as fully to point out the only source from whence support can be derived in the hour of suffering, both mental and bodily, and to show the world "how a Christian can die."

SELECTIONS

FROM

THE SICK MAN'S SALVE.

Philemon. We greatly desire to hear the confession of your faith, that we may be able to testify hereafter, that you departed in the faith of Christ.

Epaphroditus. I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that there is one only, true, living, immortal, and everlasting God; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in the Godhead, and notwithstanding, one very God in substance, of like majesty, glory, might, power, judgment, and will. As touching the first person in the Deity, I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that he is that God who alone is the Father, not only of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, whom of himself from everlasting he begot, his very son, and therefore likewise true and immortal God; but also of all the faithful, not by nature, but by adoption, whom he hath chosen to be his children in Christ Jesus, before the foundations of the world were laid, to love, favour, cherish, comfort, nourish, govern, defend, and bless them, both corporeally and spiritually. This God the Father I believe and confess to be almighty, and able to do whatsoever his godly will and pleasure is. With him all things are possible. There is nothing too hard for him to do, neither is any thing impossible in his sight. This God the Father Almighty, I believe and confess to be the Creator and Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things contained in them. Of nothing, by his wonderful and almighty power, he made the heavens, with the blessed angels, and heavenly spirits that are in them. The one he chose to be his glorious seat; the other he made to be his ministers, to do his blessed will and holy commandment. This God, the Father Almighty, made also the earth of nothing, with her increase; and gave breath to the people that are in it, and spirit to them that dwell therein. The heavens, the earth, and the sea, with all that ever is contained in them, are the creatures of this God the

Father Almighty, created unto this end, even that they should set forth, magnify, praise, and commend the majesty, power, might, and glory of this most mighty and glorious God. And whatsoever he made, he made it through his only begotten Son, by whom all things were made, and without whom was made nothing that was made. For when he made the heavens, this his only begotten Son was present; when he hanged the clouds above, when he fastened the springs of the deep, when he shut the sea within certain bounds, that the waters should not go over the marks that he commanded; when he laid the foundations of the earth, he was with him, ordering all things, delighting daily, and rejoicing always before him. (Prov. viii.) For the Son of God caused the light that faileth not to arise in the heaven, and covered all the earth as a cloud. And the princely prophet saith, By the word of the Lord, which word is Christ, the very Son of God, were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. This God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, I believe and am fully persuaded, that he for Christ's sake, by faith, is my most merciful Father, and that I am born again of him, not by mortal, but immortal seed, through the word of God, who liveth and abideth for ever, and so am become his son; and that he therefore loves and favours me, governs and defends me, feeds and nourishes me, and finally has made me his heir, and fellow-heir of eternal glory with his only begotten and most dearly-beloved Son, Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Now have you heard my faith concerning God the Father.

Ph. It is a faith both true and Christian, and from the beginning received of all godly persons. Will it please you likewise to rehearse your faith concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God, yea God and man?

Ep. This is it. I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that Jesus Christ the second person in the Godhead, is the only begotten Son of God; yea also the true, immortal, and ever-living God, begotten of God the Father, before any beginning; of like majesty, might, power, and glory with God the Father; of the same nature, essence, being, and substance. I believe that this Jesus Christ, who is the very brightness of his Father's glory, and the very image of his substance, first begotten before all creatures, is our Lord, even the Lord of all the faithful. And I believe that as he is called

Jesus, that is to say a Saviour, so likewise he is both able and will save me from all my sins. A God that is righteous, and such a one as saveth, there is none but he. There is salvation in none other. Neither is there any other name under heaven given unto men, wherein we may be saved, but only the name of Jesus. Of him therefore alone, as of an almighty Saviour, do I look for my salvation. For vain is the saving health that is looked for of any other. And as he is called Christ, that is to say, anointed, because he is the King and Priest of all the people of God, and is anointed with the true ointment, even with the fulness of the Holy Ghost, (for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him, but he hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows,) even so do I believe, that out of him, even as out of a lively spring and flowing fountain, this oil of gladness, I mean the Holy Ghost, came forth upon all the members of Christ, and they also in him and through him, are made Christ's, that is to say, the anointed of the Lord. For of his fulness have all we received, even grace for grace. And whosoever believeth on him, as saith the Scripture, floods of living water shall flow out of his heart. As I am of this Christ called a Christian, so do I believe that this Christ hath anointed me with his Holy Spirit, and therewith also sealed me up unto everlasting life. For they that are led with the Spirit of God are the sons of God. For the same Spirit certifieth our spirit, that we are the sons of God. If we be sons, then are we also heirs; the heirs I mean of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, of eternal glory.

Furthermore, I believe that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is called our Lord, not only because he is Lord of all things, inasmuch as he is God, and hath all things in subjection unto him, by the right of his divine nature; but also because he is the Lord, Ruler, and Governor of all the elect and chosen people of God, and mightily delivers them from the power, violence, and tyranny of Satan, sin, and death; by this means making them his own and peculiar people, and continually defends and preserves them against all evils and perils, whereunto they should daily fall through the deceitful subtleties of Satan, the vain persuasions of the world, and the poisonful enticements of the flesh, if by the mighty power of him they were not preserved. For although there are many lords, yet we have but one Lord, even Jesus Christ, by whom are all

things, and we by him. And this Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, I faithfully believe to be my Lord, my Protector, my mighty Shield, Buckler, and Defender, and that he hath delivered me from the tyranny of Satan, from the law of sin and death, and brought me in through faith, unto this grace, wherein I stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Moreover, I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that this Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is also very true and natural man, of the same flesh and blood with us, and like unto us in all points, sin alone excepted. And he became man, not after the manner of other men, but by the wonderful operation, above natural working, of God's Holy Spirit. For he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, a pure and undefiled virgin. It was necessary that Jesus Christ should be so both conceived and born, that by this his pure and clean birth he might wash and put away the corruption and filthiness of our nature, which was distained in the fall and sin of Adam. For it was not convenient, that he who was come to cleanse the world from all sin, should in any point be spotted with sin, but that both his conception and nativity should be so pure, and without blemish, that by the pureness thereof the filthiness and corruption of our conception and nativity might be put away. For of the unclean, who can be cleansed?

All we are unclean in Adam, both concerning our conception and birth. For after that God had made man like unto his own similitude and image, he placed him in paradise, and gave him liberty to eat of all the fruits in the garden of pleasure, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But man disobeyed the Lord his God, and transgressed his holy commandment. Through which disobedience and transgression of God's holy commandment, sin, curse, and death came over all mankind; so that now in Adam, so many as are born after the common course of nature, are begotten, conceived, and born in sin. They are the children of wrath, and defiled with all uncleanness, both bodily and of the mind. Now when there was no help nor comfort for man, whereby he might be redeemed out of Satan's power, and delivered from the intolerable miseries wherewith he was so very wretchedly wrapped and brought into slavery(for now man with all his thoughts,

imaginations, devices, words, deeds, enterprises, &c., is become, through the sin of Adam, wicked, impure, filthy, and sinful) then God that merciful Father, had pity upon mankind, and promised them a seed, even Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, who should tread down the head of the serpent, overcome the devil with all his power, and restore us to life again. And likewise, as God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, and true and faithful in all his words, even so hath he kept all his promises truly. For when the time was fully come, he sent his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, and through the working of the Holy Ghost, he became flesh, that is to say, true and natural man, as the Scripture witnesses, saying, The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and verity. He brought not his body with him from heaven, but as he received all his divine nature and substance of God the Father alone, even so likewise did he take all human nature and substance of the pure virgin Mary alone, through the wonderful operation of the Spirit of God; as St. Paul saith, He was born of the seed of David after the flesh. Again, he saith, He that sanctifieth, and they which are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren, and in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold here am I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch therefore as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part with them, for to put down, through death, him that had lordship over death, that is to say, the devil; and that he might deliver them, which, through the fear of death, were all their life-time in danger of bondage. For he in no condition taketh on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham taketh he on him; wherefore in all things it became him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things concerning God, for to purge the people's sins, &c.

This only begotten Son of God, by taking flesh of the virgin Mary, became like unto us in all things, sin alone excepted. I believe that by his pure conception and undefiled nativity, my conception and my birth, which coming

from Adam, was altogether impure and defiled, is cleansed, and that no part of that sinful birth is imputed unto me, but that through faith in this most blessed seed of the virgin, I am born anew and begotten of God; so that he is my Father, and I am his son, and therefore inheritor of his heavenly kingdom.

Furthermore, I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that this seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, at the commandment and will of his heavenly Father, who from everlasting, by his godly providence, ordained his only begotten Son to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people, that through his only oblation, they might for ever and ever be saved, suffered many grievous pains on his body, under the heathen ruler Pontius Pilate, and that he was crucified, died, and was buried. All those bitter pains and grievous torments, he suffered, not for himself, but for us, for our iniquities, sins, and wickednesses, that he might reconcile us unto God the Father. His pains satisfied for the pains due unto us for our faults; as the prophet saith, He only hath taken on him our infirmities, and borne our pains. He was wounded for our offences, and smitten for our wickednesses. For the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. As for us, we have all gone astray, like sheep, every one hath turned his own way. But the Lord hath heaped together upon him the iniquity of us all. He was cut off from the ground of the living; which punishment did come upon him for the transgression of my people, saith God, which indeed hath deserved that punishment. He was crucified and nailed to the cross; that by the sufferance of his flesh, he might put away the cause of hatred, even the law of commandments contained in the law written, and so win us again into the favour of God. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and by him to reconcile all things unto himself, and to set at peace by him, through the blood of his cross, both things in heaven and things in earth. His blessed body crucified, and nailed to the cross, buffeted, beaten, and scourged, was a sweet smelling sacrifice, and a right dear offering unto God the Father, sufficient enough and able to the uttermost, to put away all the sins of the faithful, and all the pains due for the same. It satisfied at the full the justice of God, and appeased his wrath stirred up through sin, against the posterity

of Adam, and made God, of an angry Lord and righteous Judge, a most merciful Father and gentle Saviour.

Neither need the faithful go for salvation unto mass-mongers, unto justiciaries, unto monkish hypocrites, nor yet unto saints. The sacrifice of Christ's body, which he himself, that everlasting Priest, offered upon the altar of the cross to God the Father, is a plenteous, full, perfect, and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, if they repent, believe, and amend. We need no such daily sacrifice as the papists heretofore, for lucre sake, have devised. As Christ Jesus is an everlasting Bishop, so his sacrifice, which he once for all offered on the cross, abides of full virtue, power, might, and strength, even unto the end of the world. Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and the same continueth for ever. Forasmuch, therefore as Christ endureth for ever, and hath an everlasting priesthood, he is able also ever to save them unto the uttermost and unto the full, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us. For he is not entered into the holy places that are made with hands, which are similitudes of true things, but is entered into heaven itself, for to appear now in the sight of God for us; not to offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with strange blood, for then must he have often suffered since the world began. But now in the end of the world hath he appeared once, to put sin to flight by the offering up of himself. And as it is appointed unto all men that they shall once die, and then cometh the judgment; even so Christ was once offered to take away the sins of many, and unto them that look for him, shall he appear again without sin unto salvation. We are sanctified and made holy by the offering of Jesus Christ's body done once for all. With one only oblation hath Christ Jesus made perfect for evermore them that are sanctified.

Adieu therefore unto all new, counterfeit, and strange sacrifices devised for lucre sake, by the crafty conveyance of man through the subtle suggestion of sly Satan. Let the faithful people of God embrace that sacrifice, that offering of Christ's blessed body, which he himself offered unto God the Father, on the altar of the cross once for all, for the sins of the world. Let them cleave and stick unto that. Let them repose their whole affiance, and put all their trust in that sweet smelling sacrifice and say with the

holy apostle, God forbid that I should rejoice in any thing, but in the cross, passion, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. So may they be sure never to perish, but to have everlasting life. Again, this Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the son also of the glorious virgin, after that he had suffered many bitter pains and grievous torments hanging upon the cross, died the death of the body, and was buried. I believe that Christ by his death hath conquered, vanquished, subdued, and overcome him that had lordship over death, that is to say the devil; that he might deliver them, which, through fear of death, were all their life time subdued unto bondage. Yea, by his death Satan's power is so broken, and the violence of death so weakened, that we may be bold to say, Death is swallowed up into victory. Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God which hath given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, after the death of his body, went down in his soul to hell, as clearly appeareth by the Scriptures; not that he should there suffer more pains, who had already on the cross suffered to the uttermost, and done whatsoever was needful for our redemption, but to break the pride of Satan, and to destroy the fury of the hellish powers against the chosen people of God, that all the faithful thereby might be delivered from death and hell; and triumphantly say with the prophet, O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy destruction.

And likewise as Christ died for our sins, so I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that he arose again the third day, through the power of his Father, for our justification, according to the Scriptures. And by this his resurrection and life he hath not only showed himself a glorious and triumphant conqueror over Satan, death, and hell, but he hath also brought life and immortality unto light, and assured us of the resurrection of our bodies; that as he is risen from the dead, so likewise shall we with our bodies rise again out of the earth at the last day. And therefore he is called the first fruits of them that are fallen asleep.

Moreover, I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that as Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the son of the virgin Mary, showed himself oftentimes after his resurrection unto his disciples,

so likewise he ascended into heaven in their presence, perfect God and perfect man, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty; above all rule, power, might, and dominion; and above all that may be named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come. For God the Father hath put all things under his feet, and hath made him above all things, the Head of the congregation, which is his body, and the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. All power is given unto Him both in heaven and in earth. He is a Lord above all lords, and a King above all kings. Yea, he is an Almighty God, with his Father, of the same majesty, might, power, and glory; and notwithstanding, inasmuch as he is man, he is also our Intercessor, Mediator, and Advocate. For he is not gone up into heaven to be an idle gazer, nor to neglect his church, but to pray for the faithful, to make intercession for them unto God the Father, to be our Mediator and Advocate, and to appease the wrath of God the Father, if at any time through sin, it waxeth hot against us, and to win us again unto his favour, and to keep us in the same unto the end. We need not seek help of any other, neither yet call on the saints departed, that they may pray for us, and plead our cause before God. The man Christ Jesus alone, who gave himself a ransom for all men is our sufficient Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor, as the Holy Scripture teacheth in divers places.

Whosoever therefore refuses to pray unto this man Christ Jesus to be his Mediator and Advocate unto God the Father, and flieth unto another, without all doubt he is an enemy unto Christ; to the uttermost of his power he laboureth to put Christ out of office. For since the time of his ascension, his chief and principal office is to be our Intercessor, Mediator, and Advocate. He ascended also into heaven to lead captivity captive, and to give gifts unto men. Satan, that old enemy of mankind, had taken us captive, made us his bond-slaves, through sin, carried us away with his craft and subtlety, from the Lord our God, and brought us into his kingdom of darkness, which is the dreadful kingdom of sin, death, and hell. Thus were we in great misery, and should for ever have been damned, if we had not been holpen by some other means than we with all our wits could devise. Therefore even of very pity and tender compassion came one who is much stronger than Satan, even Christ that mighty lion of the tribe of Judah, a right

conqueror, a strong Samson, a valiant subduer of death, sin, and hell, a puissant vanquisher of Satan, &c. He, as a king of glory, mightily burst into Satan's kingdom, broke open the gates of hell, took the prince of darkness, bound him, took him prisoner, made him his bond-slave, destroyed his empire, led away his prisoners, bringing them again into most joyful and blessed liberty; so that all they which believe in this most mighty emperor and valiant conqueror Christ Jesus, are delivered from the tyranny of Satan, and from the power of sin, death, and hell. There is no damnation now unto them which are ingrafted in Christ Jesus; Satan, sin, death, and hell, with all the infernal army, cannot hurt the elect and chosen people of God. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's chosen? It is God that justifieth; who is he that can condemn? it is Christ which died, yea rather which is risen again, who is also on the right hand of God, and makes intercession for us. Who then shall separate us from the love of God, &c.?

And as Christ by his most glorious and triumphant ascension led captivity captive, so likewise hath he given gifts unto men, even that Holy Ghost, that Spirit of truth, that Comforter who worketh in the hearts of the faithful new motions, and spiritual effects, faith, hope, love, fear, humility, modesty, meekness, patience, longsuffering, joy, peace, quietness of conscience, temperance, goodness, mercy, &c. He mortifies the old man, and quickens the new man, which is renewed unto the knowledge and image of Him that made him, which after God is shapen in righteousness and true holiness. Again, Christ ascending up into heaven, by the power of his Godhead hath prepared, in the kingdom of the Father, everlasting and joyful dwelling places for so many as believe in him; as he himself witnesses, saying, I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again unto you, and take you unto myself, that where I am ye also may be. He hath also assured us of our ascension, and going up into heaven, not only in soul but also in body. He is risen again corporeally, and gone before into the glorious kingdom of his Father; to declare that we also, after the general resurrection, shall both body and soul be carried into heaven. The members must needs be like the Head. Christ our head is risen again, therefore shall we his members rise again. Christ our head is ascended and gone up into heaven, both body and soul;

therefore shall we his members ascend and go up into heaven, both body and soul, also. Christ our head was taken up into heaven in a cloud, both body and soul; therefore shall we his members also be taken up in a cloud to meet the Lord, and so shall we, both body and soul, dwell with the Lord Christ our head for ever and ever; as the holy apostle testifieth, saying, If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them which sleep by Jesus God will bring again with him. For this say we unto you in the word of the Lord, that we who shall live, and shall remain in the coming of the Lord, shall not come ere they which sleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel and trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall arise first; then we which shall live, even we which shall remain, shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Finally, I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that as the Lord Christ is ascended up into heaven, so shall he come again from heaven with power and much glory, nobly accompanied by thousands of blessed angels and heavenly saints, for to judge the quick and the dead, the faithful and unfaithful, and to give every man his reward according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. And when he thus gloriously shall come unto the judgment, all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. The faithful shall go into eternal life, the unfaithful into everlasting damnation. Every man shall he reward according to his deeds; that is to say, praise, honour, and immortality to them which continue in good doing and seek immortality, but unto them that are rebels, and that do not obey the truth, but follow unrightcousness, shall come indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon the soul of every man that doth evil.

Now have ye heard my faith concerning Jesus Christ, God and man. And I believe all things that I have spoken to be undoubtedly true. And I am fully persuaded, that Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour, wrought all things that ever he did in his humanity, for me and for my salvation. To save me, to reconcile me unto God the Father, to make me an inheritor of everlasting glory, he came

down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary. Yea, he suffered, was crucified, died, went down into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and shall come again unto judgment, for me, for my sake, for my glory and salvation. Thus have ye heard my faith concerning God the Father, and God the Son, which is also man, receiving his human nature of the glorious virgin Mary.

Eu. Whosoever thus believes and confesses of God the Father, and of his Son Christ, the same can never perish. For as our Saviour Christ said unto God the Father in his prayer, This is everlasting life, even to know thee, the alone true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

The. God saith by the prophet, By the knowledge of him, who is my righteous servant, he shall justify many.

Ph. God grant us the true knowledge of his Son Christ; so may we be sure to be justified, saved, and glorified.

Ep. Amen. But now hear also my faith concerning the third person in the Deity—the Holy Ghost.

I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that the Holy Ghost is one and equal God, in glory, majesty, power, and might, with the Father and the Son, proceeding from the Father and the Son, after an unknown and unexpressible manner. This Spirit of God and God himself, is he by whom God the Father through his Son Christ, and in Christ, worketh and quickeneth all things. All the benefits and graces which God the Father bestows upon us for Christ's sake, this Holy Ghost brings unto us, and makes us new vessels to receive them; which otherwise, even of nature, are so fleshly minded, that we perceive nothing at all of those things which appertain unto the Spirit of God, neither are we able to think a good thought of ourselves. For this godly Spirit worketh in us new motions, and new affections, and gives us grace both to will and to do good. He is a Teacher of all the faithful, and leadeth them into all truth. He is a Comforter of weak and sorrowful minds. He keepeth the true Christians unmoveable in one faith, and opens their senses to understand the mysteries of God aright. He clothes them with his gifts, and giveth to every one a several gift even as he will. He is the ruler of the Christian congregation. He is the anointing wherewith all the faithful are anointed, and thereof are called the anointed of the Lord. He is given unto the faithful to be

the earnest of their inheritance, for the recovery of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory. He with his godly breath quickeneth, maketh alive, and conserveth all things. He, of carnal, makes us spiritual; of worldly, godly; of wicked, blessed; of the bond-slaves of Satan, the dearly beloved sons of God; of sinful sinks, his own most pleasant and holy temple; of cruel, meek; of proud, humble; of malicious, charitable; of contentious, quiet; of covetous, liberal; of hard hearted, meek spirited; of froward, gentle; of stubborn, obedient; of dissolute, temperate and sober; of false, true; of foolish, wise; of idle, godly occupied; of unchaste, pure and clean; of the haters of God, the friends of God; of the lovers of pleasures, the lovers of godliness; to end, he makes us of earthly, heavenly. Whatsoever goodness we have, he is the only author, worker, and giver of the same. Therefore I believe and confess that this Holy Spirit, is one and equal God with God the Father and God the Son, proceeding from them both, with the like majesty, glory, might, and power. I believe that this Holy Ghost is my comforter, and that he prays for me, renews me, dwells in me, and has sealed me up to everlasting glory.

Now you have heard my faith and my belief in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost; which three I believe and confess to be one God, whose seat is the heaven, and whose footstool is the earth. He is an everlasting and almighty God, who alone is to be honoured and served in spirit and in truth. For he alone can help us, forasmuch as he is almighty; and will help us, because he is merciful, true, and faithful; yea, and that not for our righteousness, but for his name's sake. To this one true, living, everlasting, immortal, invisible, and alone wise God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy will's sake they are and were created. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanks, and honour, and might, be unto our God for evermore.

Simply and plainly have I here before you all rehearsed my faith, and belief in God, and in the three persons of the Godhead, as I have heretofore learned it out of God's most holy word. I confess that many things more might be

spoken of the wonderful mysteries of this most blessed and holy Trinity; but they far exceed my understanding, and therefore I dare not meddle with them. For it is written, He that is a searcher of the majesty of God, shall be oppressed by the glory thereof. Again, Seek not out the things that are above thy capacity, and search not the ground of such things as are too mighty for thee; but look what God hath commanded thee, think upon that always, and be not curious in many of his works. For it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes things that are secret.

The. The holy apostle also counsels us to be modest and sober, and that we be not curious to search after the knowledge of things which pass our capacity.

Eu. The holy psalmist seems to have followed this counsel well. He saith on this manner of himself, Lord, I am not high minded. I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too high for me. But I refrain my soul and keep it low, like a child that is weaned from his mother; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child. O Israel, trust in the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

Ph. Neighbour Epaphroditus, there remain yet behind more articles of the Christian faith; have you forgotten them?

Ep. No, good brother Philemon; God forbid I should forget them. For in them, next unto God, now lies my chief consolation and comfort. Should I, being in this case, forget the holy congregation of God, which is the company and fellowship of the saints and chosen people of God, of whom Christ the Lord is the head, ruler, and governor? Should I, in this my sickness, forget the high and singular benefits of God, which of his own free mercy and mere goodness he liberally giveth to all faithful penitent sinners; namely, remission of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? God forbid, God forbid. For the remembrance of these things comforts me greatly. I will therefore declare my faith concerning these articles.

Eu. God strengthen you.

Ep. As I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that there is but one God, in whom alone I put all my confidence, trust, and hope of salvation, and at whose hand only I look for all good things pertaining either to the body, or unto the soul; so likewise I

both believe and confess, that there is but one holy universal church or congregation of the faithful, albeit they be dispersed and scattered abroad throughout the world, in divers and sundry places, who are gathered and knit together through the operation of the Holy Ghost in the unity of the Spirit, and joined together in one faith, as members of one body, whereof Jesus Christ is the Head. This holy church or congregation, linked together in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, is a spiritual house builded of living stones, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, a holy nation, a people which are won, that they should show forth the virtues of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. This church is the congregation of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. This holy company are citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone. This church is the spouse of Christ, and knoweth none other husband and head, but Christ alone. This blessed company are those sheep which gladly hear the voice of their shepherd Christ, but they fly from the voices of strangers. And as they are one body and one spirit, so they confess one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. There is among them no dissension, but they maintain one truth, preach one doctrine, speak one thing, are of one mind, and one meaning. This holy catholic church, or universal congregation, is that holy city, that new Jerusalem, which came down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride garnished for her husband.

And because no man shall doubt of what church I speak, I confess THAT to be the holy catholic and apostolic church, which is the company and fellowship of the saints; that is to say of the faithful which are sanctified and made holy by the Spirit of God, and by the blood of Christ our Saviour; which have the pure word of God truly and sincerely preached, and the sacraments duly and faithfully ministered among them; which excommunicate all disobedient notable sinners, and receive into their fellowship such as unfeignedly repent and turn from their wickedness; which study in all things to please the Lord God, and to live in all godliness and honesty. This church and company, Christ loved so dearly, that he gave himself for it, to

sanctify it, and cleanse it in the fountain of water through the word, to make it unto himself a glorious congregation, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blame. Whosoever is in this church and congregation, he may be sure to be saved. But whosoever is not in it, he is without all doubt damned. For like as in the time of Noah, no man escaped with his life, but was drowned in the flood, except he entered into the ark of Noah; even so whosoever is not found in this fellowship or catholic church, agreeing with it, in one faith, doctrine, hope, love, and sacraments, he shall perish and be lost. For without the church of Christ there is no salvation, no forgiveness of sins, no favour of God, no quietness of conscience, no true gospel, or glad tidings of eternal health. Therefore in this holy church and blessed fellowship of the saints and faithful, I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that there is remission and forgiveness of sins, and that without it no sin is forgiven, neither is there any hope of salvation. For as it is impossible that any member can live which is not in the body, so is it impossible, that any man may live in his soul, and be released out of death by remission of sin, who is not a member of the body of Christ. For Christ hath reconciled us all unto God the Father in one body. And therefore must they all stand at variance with God that are not members of this body, of the which Christ is the Head, to the which also he giveth salvation. This therefore is a great comfort to the faithful congregation, that although through infirmity of nature or otherwise, they fall, offend God, and break the Lord's commandments; yet in this company there is remission and forgiveness of sins, so soon as ever they repent, be sorry for their sins, and believe to have remission of all their sins for Christ's precious blood's sake. Sin we ever so often, and ever so grievously, yet being members of this holy company, we are straightways forgiven, and delivered from the pain and the fault, so soon as we turn unto the Lord our God. And these our sins be not forgiven of men, but of God alone; neither forgives he a part, and reserves a part, but he forgives all, or else none at all.

Again, God forgives not the fault, and reserves the pain; but with the fault he also forgives the pain due for the fault, that he may be a whole and perfect Saviour; as St. John saith, If we say we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we eonfess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to make us clean from all iniquities. And God himself saith by the prophet, I will forgive their misdeeds, and will never remember their sins any more. Again, I am He, yea I am He alone, who put away thy iniquities, yea and that for mine own sake, and I will remember thy sins no more. And king Hezekiah in his prayer unto God said, It is thou, O Lord, that dost east all my sins behind thy back. The prophet Micah also saith, Where is there such a God as thou art? Thou pardonest wickedness, and forgivest the offenees of the remnant of thine heritage. He keepeth not his wrath for ever. And why? his delight is to have compassion. He shall turn again and be merciful unto us. He shall put down our wiekednesses, and east all our sins into the bottom of the sea. I faithfully believe that I am a member of Christ's ehurch; and I am also fully persuaded, that all my sins be forgiven me of God the Father, not for my merits, which are none, but for Jesus Christ's sake; for Christ's merits, passion, death, and blood-shedding. For, graee and truth came by Jesus Christ, saith the holy evangelist. And I believe that God, for his Son's sake, hath so freely and wholly forgiven me all my sins, that he will never remember them more, never impute them unto me, nor lay them to my charge; but so receive me into his favour, as though I had never offended him, and make me his son, and heir of everlasting glory. For everlasting life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, saith the apostle. This is the stay and quieting of my conscienee at this present. This makes me not to fear death, but joyfully to look for it, and lovingly to embraee it whensoever it comes. For I wish to be loosened from this mortal body, and to be with Christ. My soul hath a fervent desire to God, even unto the Lord my God. Deliver my soul, O Lord, out of prison, that I may come unto thee, and glorify thy holy name.

For albeit this my weak, feeble, sick, and mortal body shall give over to nature, and die, yet I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely eonfess with my mouth, that at the last day it shall rise again, as the bodies of all others, both men and women that have died, shall likewise do. There shall be a general resurrection of the flesh; all that are dead shall rise again, some to everlasting life,

and some to everlasting pain and damnation. As our Saviour Christ saith, The hour shall come in the which all that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. Yea, they that shall live and remain until the coming of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus shall all be changed, yea, and that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, by the last trumpet. For the trump shall blow, and the dead shall rise incorruptible, and we shall be changed; for this corruptible body must put on an incorruptible; and this mortal body, must put on immortality. Therefore I fear not at all the putting off of this body; for although it sleep in the earth for a time, and, according to the ordinance of God, be turned into dust, yet shall it awake, and rise again out of the earth, so that I shall receive it in far better state than ever I had it in this world, even like unto the glorious body of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. Wherefore I say, with the holy man Job, I believe that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise out of the earth in the latter day, and that I shall be clothed again with this skin, and see God my Saviour in my flesh. Yea, I myself shall behold him, not with other eyes, but with these same eyes. This hope is steadfastly set in my heart.

To end, I unfeignedly believe with my heart, and freely confess with my mouth, that after my body and soul are united and knit together, I, with all the faithful that have lived from the beginning unto the very end of the world, shall, through the benefit of Christ Jesus, enjoy everlasting life. So many as have truly believed on Christ Jesus, shall enjoy continual and blessed peace, glister as the shining of heaven, and be as the stars, world without end; yea, they shall be clad with white garments, and have golden crowns upon their heads. They shall glorify God, and do service day and night before the glorious throne of his Majesty. They shall see God face to face, and for ever and ever enjoy the presence of God's most excellent Majesty, and the company of all the heavenly angels and blessed saints. Of the joys of everlasting life, which God hath in store for all the faithful believers, can no man either write, speak, or think at the full; as it is written, The eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which

God hath prepared for them that love him. And this everlasting life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be all praise, honour, and glory, for ever and ever.

Thus have I declared before you my faith concerning God and his holy mysteries, grounded I trust on the true and undeceivable word of God. And I faithfully believe that God, my heavenly Father, will be merciful unto me, and forgive me all my sins for Christ's sake, and receive me into his heavenly kingdom, and give me everlasting life, which I now most entirely desire, wish, and long for, counting myself then most happy, when through death I shall take my passage toward that most glorious and heavenly kingdom. For I know and am fully persuaded, that if my earthly mansion of this dwelling were once destroyed, I should have a building of God, a habitation not made with hands, but everlasting in heaven.

Ch. God give us all that heavenly mansion.

Ep. Well, come thou hither mine own dear wife, let me kiss thee and bid thee farewell. God keep thee and defend thee. Come ye hither also my most sweet children, that I may kiss you also before I die; see ye forget not those mine exhortations, that I made unto you, but lock them up in the chest of your breasts.* God bless you, and send you prosperous days on the earth. God give you his Spirit, that ye may live in faith, fear, and love, and serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life. Ye my servants draw near, give me your hands. Fare ye well; God make you his servants, and send you obedient hearts unto his holy and blessed law. Weep not for me, but pray for me, that the will of God may be done in me, and that I may both patiently and thankfully abide the good pleasure of God. I trust we shall have a joyful meeting again together in the kingdom of our heavenly Father, where we shall reign one with another in joy and glory, world without end, and see the glorious Majesty of God face to face, unto our exceeding consolation and comfort. Well, depart in the name of God. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all.

Ph. Amen. Now brother Epaphroditus, how do you?

Ep. The spirit is willing and ready, but the flesh is weak.

* The sick man here refers to the exhortations which he had given to the members of his family, suited to their various conditions.

Ch. I pray you, sir, be of good comfort.

Ep. The Lord is my comfort, he dealeth with me graciously.

Eu. Do you lack any thing, sir?

Ep. Nothing but strength from above, that I may patiently abide and suffer the good pleasure of God. Thy will be done, O heavenly Father, in earth as it is in heaven. Let me lie somewhat higher with my head. I thank you, it is well; a little thing, God knoweth, disquiets this my sick and weak body. I trust that within few hours it shall be past all sickness and misery, and shall both quietly and sweetly sleep in the heart of the earth, until the great day of the general resurrection. In the mean season, shall my soul be in glory with Christ, and joyfully behold the glorious Majesty of God. I will cease talking for a little while with you, and fall to communication with my Lord God in my heart. I beseech you pray for me, that I may continue faithful unto the end; for it is written, Be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

Ph. Neighbours, come aside, and let us with fervent hearts fall to prayer.

Ch. Most gladly.

Ph. Lord, hear our prayers.

Eu. And let our cry come unto thee.

Ph. Save this thy servant, O Lord, thou Father of mercies, and God of all consolation.

Ch. And so work in him by thy blessed Spirit, that he may put his whole trust in thee.

Ph. Send him present help from thy holy place.

The. And evermore mightily defend him against Satan, sin, desperation, death, and hell.

Ph. Let his enemy the devil have no advantage over him.

Eu. Nor the wicked approach to hurt him.

Ph. Be unto him, O Lord, a strong tower, a mighty castle, and a sure fortress.

Ch. To defend him from the face of his enemy.

Ph. O Lord, hear our prayers.

Eu. And let our cry come unto thee.

Ph. O Lord, look down from heaven; behold, visit, and relieve this thy servant. Look upon him with the eyes of thy mercy, give him comfort and sure confidence in thee, defend him from the danger of the enemy, and keep him in perpetual peace and safety, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hear us almighty and most merciful God and Saviour; extend thy accustomed goodness to this thy servant, who is grieved with sickness; visit him, O Lord, as thou didst visit Peter's wife's mother, and the captain's servant. Restore unto this sick person his former health, if it be thy will, or else give him grace so to take thy visitation, that after this painful life is ended, he may dwell with thee in life everlasting. Amen.

Philemon. Let us go again unto our sick brother.

Now neighbour Epaphroditus, how do you? Rejoice, I pray you, in the Lord, and bear this cross, which God hath now laid upon you, both patiently and thankfully.

Ep. If I have heretofore been glad to receive health at the Lord's hand, why should I not also now take in good worth this his most loving and gentle visitation? The Lord gave me health, and the Lord hath taken it away again. It hath befallen me as the Lord's pleasure is, blessed be the name of the Lord.

The. This comforts us greatly to hear so good and godly words proceed out of your mouth. For, of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, saith our Saviour Christ; a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.

Ep. No man is good, but God alone. We are all unclean and unprofitable servants. If we have any goodness, it is of God. As blessed James saith, Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of all lights, that he who rejoiceth should rejoice in the Lord.

Ch. Now good neighbour, how feel you yourself?

Ep. O brother Christopher, I perceive there is no other way with me but one, even to depart from this life.

Ph. Let it not grieve you, most gentle neighbour, to give over unto nature, and depart from this world at the calling of God. There is no means to escape. Adam sinned and became mortal. All we have sinned also in Adam. Therefore all we are made in him mortal, and subject unto death. As by one man, saith St. Paul, sin entered into the world, and death by the means of sin; even so death also went over all men, insomuch as all we have sinned. The reward of sin is death. How desirous

the holy apostle St. Paul was to go from this vale of misery unto the heavenly kingdom, these his words manifestly declare: Christ is to me life, and death is to me advantage. Again, I desire to be loosed, and to be with Christ. What shall I speak of that ancient and godly father Simeon, who so soon as he had seen Christ, knowing him to be the Saviour of the world, was very desirous to die, and burst out into these words, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy promise; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Of the like affection with these before rehearsed, were without doubt all godly persons from the beginning; then being most joyful, when they saw the time of their departure from this wretched world to be come. So likewise, brother Epaphroditus, ought both you and we to rejoice and be glad, when death approacheth and cometh upon us. For even then beginneth our felicity, wealth, quietness, safety, joy, pleasure, comfort, and glory; as the voice from heaven said, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, For from henceforth, the Spirit saith that they shall be at rest from their labours, pains, and travails. Precious and right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, saith the psalmist.

Ep. But death is terrible and fearful.

Ph. To the unfaithful, death indeed is terrible and fearful. For then begin their sorrows and miseries, their plagues and torments; as we may see in the history of the rich man. But to the faithful and true believers, death is pleasant and amiable, as it is written, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. For then cease all their miseries and travails, and begin their joys and pleasures. Whosoever is a true Christian, and fixes the eyes of his mind, through true faith, on the death of Christ, he shall not be greatly afraid of death; but he shall rather triumph over death, and with a lusty courage say thus unto death, O death, I will be thy death. For death is swallowed up into victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. The sting of death can now no more hurt the faithful. As our Saviour Christ testifies, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into damnation, but is escaped from death unto life. Again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that putteth his trust in me, hath ever-

lasting life. I am that living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. Also, Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never taste death. Also, in another place, I am the resurrection and life. He that believeth in me, although he be dead, yet shall he live. And every one that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.

Ep. Death is painful.

Ph. Who will not be content to suffer a little and short pain, that he may for ever after enjoy continual quietness and everlasting rest? Nothing is gotten without pain and travail; no man is crowned except he strive lawfully. The afflictions of this life are not worthy of the glory which shall be showed upon us; notwithstanding, if we die with Christ, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall reign with him. Therefore be of good comfort. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. The Lord our God is a Father of mercy, and a God of all consolation, who will without all doubt be present with you, and comfort you in all your sicknesses and pains. For, as the afflictions of Christ are plenteous in us, even so is our consolation plenteous by Christ. As you are partaker of the affliction, so shall you be partaker also of the consolation. For this short and light trouble, sickness, and pain, prepareth an exceeding and an eternal weight of glory unto you, while you look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen. For, the things which are not seen are eternal. If you consider the great and intolerable pains that many good and godly men have suffered on their bodies for Christ's sake, it shall the less grieve you to bear this your sickness, yea death, and the pains thereof.

I pass over many others, both of the Old and New Testament, who refused no kind of pains, so that they might obtain the reward of everlasting life. Some, as that most blessed apostle saith, were tried with mocking and scourging, with bonds and imprisonment; some were stoned, some were hewn asunder, some slain with the sword, all were troubled and vexed. How glad, joyful, and ready the holy apostle St. Paul was, to suffer all kinds of pain and torments for the glory of God, these his words abundantly show, The Holy Ghost testifies in every city, saying, that bonds and troubles do abide me; but I care not for them, neither is my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with

joy, &c. Again, I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. What shall I speak of the other blessed martyrs, whereof some were devoured with wild beasts, some burned with fire unto ashes, some broiled unto death upon hot coals, some slain with the sword, some hanged upon gibbets, some pierced to death with arrows, some beaten to death with stones, some boiled, some rent in pieces with hot burning iron hooks, some racked, some drowned, some cruelly murdered in prison, &c. Who is able to declare the most bitter pains, and grievous torments which they gladly and willingly suffered in their bodies, for the glory of God, and the fruition of his majesty? If you consider these things well, you shall easily find, that the pains which you now suffer are nothing to be compared unto the most bitter and intolerable torments which the men of God have suffered. Faint not, therefore, good neighbour Epaphroditus, but abide the good pleasure of God, and his blessed working; so shall he without fail bring all things to such pass, as shall be most unto his glory, and unto your comfort.

Ep. Death taketh me away from all temporal things that I have.

Ph. In this world we all are but strangers and pilgrims; we have here no dwelling city, but look for another that is to come. But after your departure from this vale of wretchedness, you shall have a building of God, a habitation not made with hands, but everlasting in heaven. As touching your gold and silver, and such other worldly treasures, wherewith God blessed you in this world for a season, never remember them any more, but bid them farewell. For what other things are they, seem they ever so precious, pleasant, and godly, than red and white earth, and hereafter shall return unto vile dust? In the stead of them, God in his kingdom shall give you such treasures as never man with mortal eyes saw the like. You also shall have such joys and pleasures, as neither eye hath seen the like, nor ear heard the like, neither is any man able to conceive them in his heart; so great are the treasures, so infinite are the pleasures, which God hath prepared for them that love him. Who will not be glad to change corruptible and earthly things, for immortal and heavenly treasures? Here you see that you lose nothing by death, but get very much; so that you may now say with

the holy apostle, Christ is to me life, and death is to me gain.

Ep. Death takes me away from my dear friends, in whose company I greatly delight.

Ph. In worldly friendship there is no certainty nor assurance. He who this day is a friend, is to-morrow an enemy; this is proved true among men almost by daily experience. There are divers kinds of friends. Some are earnest and hearty friends, who will abide by man when fortune is most froward; but of these there are very few, and they which now are such, may suddenly, through some occasion, be made a man's utter enemies, Therefore, saith David, Put not your confidence in princes, nor in the children of men, in whom there is no health. Also the prophet saith, Cursed be he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his strength. You see in the gospel, that they who so dearly loved Christ, that they would have made him a king, shortly after, for no occasion, fell away from him, and followed him no more. Again, those people who very joyfully received Christ when he came riding into Jerusalem, who cut down boughs, strewed them in the ways, yea, and spread their garments in the ways, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Hosanna unto the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! within few days after cried with a stout voice, and said, To the cross with him! To the cross with him! If thou lettest him go, thou art not Cæsar's friend! If he were not a wicked doer we would never have delivered him unto thee! Behold the friendship of this world! Neither let any man promise himself better things of his now most dear friend. Men are vain and liars, fleeting and unstable. But when you come into the kingdom of God, you shall have such friends as shall for ever continue faithful, loving, and constant. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, shall be your friends, who never change, but always abide. All the glorious angels and blessed spirits of heaven shall be your friends also. Who will not gladly change uncertain friends for such as are most certain and most faithful? Have you now lost any thing by departing from worldly unto heavenly friends?

Ep. But I shall never more see them, nor have the company of them, that we may rejoice and be glad again together.

Ph. If your friends live in the fear of God, and depart in the Christian faith, they may be sure to come thither, where you shall be; even unto the glorious kingdom of God, where you shall both see them, know them, talk with them, and be much more joyful with them than ever you were in this world.

Ch. Many doubt of that.

Ph. Why so? Shall the knowledge of God's elect and chosen people be less in the kingdom of God than it is in this world? We, being in this corruptible body, know one another when we see not God, but with the eyes of our faith; and shall we not know one another after that we have put off this sinful body, and see God face to face, in the sight of whom is the knowledge of all things? We shall be like the glorious angels of heaven, who know one another; can it then come to pass that one of us may not know another? Shall we be equal with the angels in other things, and inferior unto them in knowing one another? We shall know and see Christ as he is, who is the wisdom, image, and brightness of the heavenly Father; and shall the knowledge of one another be hidden from us? We are members all of one body, and shall we not know one another?

We shall know our Head, which is Christ, and shall we not know ourselves? We shall be citizens of one heavenly city, where continual light shall be, and shall we be overwhelmed with such darkness that we shall not see and know one another? They that in this world are singing men, continuing together in one place but for a season, know one another, and shall we, who for ever shall continue together, singing, praising, and magnifying the Lord our God, not know one another? They that are in household, and serve one lord and master, know one another in this world, and shall not we know one another, who in the kingdom of heaven shall continually serve the Lord our God together, with one spirit and with one mind? There is a certain knowledge one of another here in the earth, even amongst the unreasonable and brute beasts, and shall our senses be so darkened in the life to come, that we being immortal, incorruptible, and like unto the angels of God, yea, seeing God face to face, shall not know one another? We shall know God as he is, and shall we not know one another? Adam, before he sinned, being in the state of innocence, knew Eve so soon as God

brought her unto him, and called her by her name, ar
shall not we, being in heaven, where we shall be in
much more blessed and perfect state than ever Adam wa

man shall sit in the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit upon twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. If after the general resurrection, and at the judgment, one should not know another, how shall then the apostles judge them unto whom they preached? They cannot judge and be witnesses of the condemnation of them whom they know not. Hereby also it manifestly appeareth, that after this life one of us shall know another. After that Christ was risen again, and had a glorified body, the apostles knew him, yea, and that so perfectly, that none of them needed to say unto him, Who art thou? For they knew well that he was the Lord. Hereof also may it truly be gathered, that the faithful shall as perfectly know one another in the life to come, as the apostles knew Christ after his resurrection; or as Peter, John, and James knew Moses and Elias in the mount Tabor, when Christ was transfigured. Many other things might be alleged out of the Holy Scripture, to declare that we shall know one another after this life; but these may seem to any indifferent person abundantly to suffice.

If I would rehearse to you all the sayings both of the ancient and late writers concerning this matter, I should spend a great part of this day, and too much trouble you, notwithstanding, I will rehearse one saying of the great Gregory, in his Dialogues,* and bid all the other farewell. There is a certain thing, saith he, in God's elect and chosen people, which is to be marvelled at; for they being in heaven, do not only know them whom they knew in this world, but they know also the good people whom they never saw, even as perfectly as though they had before both seen and known them. For when they in that everlasting inheritance shall see the ancient fathers, they shall not be unknown unto them in sight, whom they always knew in work; for when all there with clearness do behold God, what is it that they shall not there know, where they know him that knoweth all things?

Ep. This is a comfortable hearing. I trust then within few hours to see all the faithful who before me have departed in the Lord, my children also, and all my other acquaintance.

Ph. You shall both see them, know them, and rejoice with them.

Eu. I marvel that any man should doubt of this doc-

* Lib iv. cap. 33.

trine, being so clearly set forth both by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and by the testimonies of the godly writers, seeing also that the very heathen who knew not God aright, being persuaded of the immortality of the soul, never doubted of it. And being thus persuaded, when the time of their departure came, they took their death the more joyfully and patiently.

The. As touching the heathen who in this world lead a just and upright life in the sight of men, I pronounce nothing, but leave them unto God's judgment. But, as concerning the faithful Christians who believe in God, fear and love God, are persuaded of their salvation in Christ's blood, and frame their life unto the uttermost of their power, according to the commandments of God, as they shall all obtain one glorious kingdom, and be citizens of one city, so likewise shall they see and know one another, talk and rejoicing one with another. This is my belief.

Ph. I agree with you in opinion concerning this matter. Therefore, good neighbour Epaphroditus, be of good cheer, take a good heart with you, faint not, neither fear you death. For the time is at hand that you, leaving this wretched world, and the inhabitants thereof, shall come into that most glorious and heavenly kingdom, where you shall have the sight and knowledge, not only of God and of his holy angels, but also of all God's elect and chosen people. All your dear friends, who are gone before you, shall gloriously come and meet you, joyfully receive you, gladly present you unto the majesty of God, and so shall you all remain together in all glory and joy for ever and ever.

Ep. Amen. God grant it. I am well content to forsake the world, and all that is in the world, and to go unto the Lord my God.

Eu. I trust that there is no other thing that troubles you.

Ep. Yea—not outwardly, but inwardly.

Eu. Inward trouble is the greatest grief in the world. Declare, I pray you, what it is, and we will do the best we can to quiet your mind.

Ep. Let me alone a little and pray for me.

Eu. Neighbours, let us commend this our sick brother unto God with our prayers, for he desireth it.

Ph. God commandeth us by his holy apostle, saying, If any be diseased among you, let him call for the elders of the congregation, and let them pray over him, and anoint him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the

prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him: acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man availeth much, if it be fervent. Let us therefore kneel down and pray.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Eu. And let our cry come unto thee.

Ph. O almighty and everlasting God, who enlightenest all men that come into this world; we beseech thee lighten the heart of this sick, weak, and diseased person with the beams of thy divine grace and mercy; that all his thoughts, words, and works, may be so directed, that he may be acceptable to thy godly Majesty, in true faith, and perfect love, through thy only Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

O eternal and merciful God, look down from heaven, and visit this thy weak servant, as thou didst visit thy saints of old. Bless him as thou didst bless Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Behold him, O Lord, with the eyes of thy mercy; replenish his heart with all joy; and keep from him all sinful thoughts and wicked imaginations. And send down thy angel of peace, that he may keep and defend him in everlasting peace, through Jesus Christ, thy dear Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the world, and the true Physician both of body and soul, we most humbly beseech thee mercifully to behold this our brother, who is a member of that mystical body whereof thou art the Head, and a branch of thee which art the true vine. Be thou to him the most loving Samaritan, pour wine and oil into his wounds, bind them up, lay him upon his beast, and never leave him until thou hast brought him into that inn, which is the glorious kingdom of thy heavenly Father. Remove from him all unfaithfulness and mistrust, and grave in his heart true and earnest faith in thee, and in thy most precious blood. Suffer him not to despair, nor to doubt of thy godly grace. Let the remembrance of thy most merciful promises, set forth in thy holy gospel, never be out of his heart. Suffer not Satan to prevail against him. Let not his conscience be cumbered with the terrors either of sin or death. Be thou his strong castle and mighty fortress. Assist him now in this his grievous affliction. Let not his soul be a prey unto his

enemies, neither give thou him over into the cruel hands of his terrible adversaries; but show upon him presently thy bountiful goodness, that he, through thy help, having the overhand of Satan, may finish his course with joy; and so, after his departure from this troublous world, come into the blessed haven of quietness; where thou, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest one true and everlasting God, world without end. Amen.

Ep. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, neither chasten me in thy heavy displeasure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; heal me, O Lord, for all my bones are sore troubled, yea, my soul is grievously vexed; but, Lord, how long, O how long, wilt thou defer thy help? Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my soul; O save me for thy mercy's sake.

Ph. Neighbour, how is it with you?

Ep. I am so troubled in my conscience, that I begin almost to despair of God's mercy towards me, yea, and to wish that there were no God and no life after this.

Ph. Gentle brother, faint not in your faith, neither despair you of the great mercies of God, but call on the Lord your God with strong faith, and he full graciously will send present remedy for you from his holy temple.

Ep. Oh! my conscience is grievously vexed, troubled, and disquieted, while I behold the fierce wrath of God against sin, and consider how wicked a life I have led, and how often I have broken God's holy commandments.

Ph. Fear not, dear brother; for though you be ever so sinful, God is merciful. Though your sins be great, yet are the mercies of God much greater. God saveth not us because we are righteous and without sin, but for his mercy and promise sake, when he seeth us repent, believe, and seek for remedy at his hand, for Christ's precious blood sake.

Ep. Satan now in this my sickness doth so molest and trouble me, that methinks I feel a very hell within my breast.

Ph. The manner of Satan, who is the common adversary of all men, is, when any man is grievously sick and like to die, straightway to come upon him at the beginning very fiercely; and to show himself terrible unto him, and to cast before his eyes such a mist, that except he take heed, he shall see nothing but the fierce wrath and terrible judgment of God against sinners, also sin, desperation,

death, and hell, and whatsoever maketh to the utter confusion of the sick man's conscience.

Ep. So is it now with me.

Ph. Fear not, it is his old practice. If you had led as holy and as perfect a life as ever did man in this world, yet would he deal on this manner with you. He knows right well that the time of your departure is at hand, and that God will shortly call you from this sorrowful and mortal life, unto a blessed and immortal life, therefore he labours unto the uttermost of his power to pluck you from so joyful a state, and to make you his prey. But be not afraid, for whom of God's elect hath he let pass unassayed, untempted, or unproved? He feared not to assail the Son of God, after he had put on our nature, and think you to escape free? His nature, disposition, and desire, is to destroy; marvel you, therefore, if he go about to seek your destruction? His property is to disquiet; wonder you, therefore, if he trouble you? He is a liar; what truth, therefore, can come out of his mouth? If he say unto you that God is angry with you, and will destroy you, know him to be a liar; and whatsoever he saith against your salvation, believe it not, but know it to be a lie. He is a murderer; what life, then, can come from him? He is an accuser of the brethren; how then can he speak any good or comfortable thing unto you? He is your utter enemy; how then is it possible that he may be your friend, and seek your quietness? Fear him not, therefore, he is but a coward, and a very slave. They are but brags, whatsoever he threatens. He may well hiss at you, but cannot sting you. He may look upon you with a terrible and fearful countenance, but he can do you no harm. He may go about to tempt you, but to overcome you is not in his power. Hear what St. James saith, Resist the devil, and he shall flee from you. Draw nigh unto God, and he shall draw nigh unto you.

Ep. But how shall I resist the devil?

Ph. With faith, with prayer, and with the word of God.

Ep. How with faith?

Ph. Cast the eyes of your mind with strong faith on the Seed of the woman, who hath trodden down the serpent's head, and destroyed his power; as He saith by the prophet, O hell, I will be thy destruction; He who by death hath put him to flight who had lordship over death, even the devil, that He might deliver them who through fear of

death were all their life subdued unto bondage; who also, as the apostle saith, hath spoiled rule and power, hath made a show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them in his own person. So shall you be sure to escape his grievous assaults. For the Son of God appeared for this purpose, even to destroy the works of the devil. Christ was figured by that brazen serpent which God commanded Moses to set up in the wilderness, adding this promise unto it, that whosoever being stricken of the fiery serpents did look on that, he should be healed. After this manner it is between Christ and us: if that fiery serpent the devil hath stricken and wounded us, let us look upon Christ with strong faith, and we shall surely, for God's promise sake, be made whole. As Christ himself testifieth, saying, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that all who believe on him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. If Satan therefore hath either stricken or wounded you already, or else goeth about so to do, fear not, repair unto Christ, look on him with the eyes of your faith, so shall you be free from his venomous jaws. For as you are now tempted, so were all godly men; but they overcame the tempter through strong faith in Christ. Therefore, saith St. Peter, be ye sober and watch; for your adversary, the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist ye strong in faith. St. John also saith, This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. Not only all godly and faithful men were tempted, but also our Saviour Christ. And this is a great comfort unto us; for in that he himself was tempted, he is able to succour them also that are tempted. Christ being tempted, overcame his temptations, to get us the victory over the tempter. His triumph is our victory, and his victory is our triumph. Whatsoever he did and got in his human nature, he did and got it not for himself, but for us. And God is faithful, saith the apostle, who will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, but will in the midst of the temptation make a way that ye may be able to bear it. Believe therefore in Christ, and you are without all danger.

Ep. I believe. O Lord, help thou mine unbelief. O Lord, increase my faith.

Ph. Fear you not, but God both will and doth hear

your prayers; for the Lord is nigh unto all them that call on him in truth.

Ep. You made mention also of prayer, saying, that the same is also a mean to resist Satan.

Ph. I rejoice greatly, and give God most hearty thanks, that in this your sickness, your memory continues still steadfast and perfect.

Ep. I praise God for it.

Ph. Prayer is a necessary remedy for the avoiding* of Satan's temptations, as the Holy Scriptures teach manifestly in many places. Our Saviour Christ saith, Watch and pray, that ye fall not into temptation. Again, this kind of devils is not cast out but by prayer and fasting. To repress the temptations of Satan, all godly men, even from the beginning, fled unto faithful prayer, as a mighty and sure defence against Satan and all his crafty assaults. And God hath commanded us to pray whensoever we are troubled, and also promises us that he will both hear and help us. Call upon me (saith he) in the time of thy trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt honour me. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a troubled heart, and he will help them that be broken in spirit.

Ep. Now, good neighbours, pray for me.

Ph. O heavenly and most merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee for thy Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord, have pity upon this thy creature, and succour him in these horrible assaults and temptations of the devil. Deliver his soul in these extreme necessities, from all the infernal army. Send him down strength from above, that he may be able to resist his enemy, and to stand steadfast in the time of this his temptation. Be thou his strong rock, castle, shield, tower, and defence, that he in this great trouble, being preserved from the tyranny of his enemies, through thy godly grace, assistance, and help, may continue in the true and Christian faith unto his life's end, and afterward be received into thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ep. Now will I, poor and wretched sinner, offer my prayers also unto the Lord my God, in Jesus Christ's name, trusting and believing undoubtedly, that he graciously will hear me, and defend me against mine enemies.

Ph. These are the words of Christ, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

* Expelling, resisting.

Ep. Out of the depth do I cry unto thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my prayer. Save me, O God, for the waters of trouble are come in, even unto my soul. I stick fast in the deep mire where no ground is; I am come into the deep waters, so that the floods run over me. Take me out of the mire, that I sink not. O let me be delivered from all them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the water-floods drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. Hear me, O Lord, for thy loving kindness is comfortable. Turn me unto thee, according unto the multitude of thy mercies, and hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble. O haste thee and hear me. Draw nigh unto my soul, and save it. O deliver me because of mine enemies, for thou knowest my reproof, my shame, and my dishonour; mine adversaries are still in thy sight. So shall I, being delivered from these great miseries, through thy gracious benefit, praise and magnify the name of thee, my Lord God, for ever and ever.

Neighbour Philemon, as I remember, you told me, that besides faith and prayer, the word of God was also a godly help, and strong fortress against the cruel assaults of the devil.

Ph. It is truth. For so are we taught in the Holy Scripture. St. Paul declares unto the Ephesians, saying, above all things take to you the shield of faith, wherewith ye may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray always, with all manner of prayer and supplication in the Spirit. With the word of God, Christ drove away Satan, and resisted all his wicked temptations. For it is the power of God to save so many as believe. In the word of God, plenteous and present remedies are found against Satan and all his subtle suggestions. Therefore, saith the psalmist, I have hid thy speeches, O Lord, in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Now are ye clean, saith Christ, through the word which I spake unto you.

Eu. God deliver me from destruction.

Ph. Arm yourself with faith, prayer, and with the word of God, and doubt ye not. For these kind of armours and weapons Satan can by no means abide.

Ep. The Lord preserve and defend me. Neighbours, I will pray again unto the Lord my God while I have time.

How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? For ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? O how long shall I seek counsel in my soul, and be so vexed in my heart? How long shall mine enemy triumph over me? Consider and hear me, O Lord my God, lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death, lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him. If I be cast down, they that trouble me will rejoice at it. But my trust is in thy mercy, and my heart is joyful in thy salvation. I, again, for this thy loving kindness, will praise thy holy name.

Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my strength, think not scorn of me, lest if thou make as though thou heardest me not, I become like them that go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my humble petitions when I cry unto thee, when I hold up my hands toward the mercy seat of thy holy temple. O hide not thou thy face from me, nor cast thy servant away in thy displeasure. The sorrows of death have compassed me round about, and the overflowings of ungodliness made me afraid; the pains of hell came about me, and the snares of death have overtaken me. Be thou not far from me, O Lord; thou art my succour, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog; save me from the lion's mouth. So shall I declare thy name unto my brethren, and in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

Eu. I doubt not, brother Epaphroditus, but that God hath heard these your most humble prayers and lamentable supplications, and will, when he seeth convenient time, send you remedy, and give you a joyful heart, so that you shall overcome Satan, and say, The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom, then, shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom, then, shall I be afraid? Though a host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid. And though there rose up war against me; yet will I put my trust in him. Again, Death is swallowed up in victory; Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, who hath given us victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ep. Oh! when will the Lord have mercy on me, and deliver me from the grievous assaults of mine enemy? O Lord, why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I thus heavily, while the enemy oppresseth me? Up Lord, why sleepest thou? Awake, and be not absent from me for

ever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest my misery and trouble? My soul is brought low, even unto the dust, my belly cleaveth unto the ground. Arise and help me, O Lord, and deliver me for thy mercies' sake.

Ch. Faint not, neither despair you of God's mercy, but take a good heart unto you, and abide the Lord's pleasure. Be of like mind with him who prayed on this manner unto God, saying, Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us. It is good to be quiet, saith the prophet, and patiently to abide the saving health of the Lord. For the Lord will not forsake you for ever; but though he punish you now, and suffer Satan to trouble you a little while, for the trial of your faith, yet according to the multitude of his mercies will he receive you into grace again, and not cast you out of his heart for ever. He is the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation. He will not be always chiding, neither will he for ever be angry with us. For like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him. For he knoweth whereof we be made, he remembereth that we are but dust.

Ep. Lord be thou merciful unto me, hide not thyself in a cloud, but show me thy loving and gentle countenance that I may be saved. Send me present help from above, or else I perish. For I wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rule, against power, against worldly rulers, even governors of the darkness of this world, against spiritual craftiness in heavenly things. This grievous conflict, O Lord, is with such an enemy as feared not to assail thee; whom thou thyself callest the prince of this world. And thy holy apostle termeth him, the god of this world. Arise, therefore, O Lord, and take my part. Be thou, O God, my defender, my house of defence, and my castle. Deliver me out of the snare which mine enemy hath laid for me, that I, being set at liberty, may sing praises to thy blessed name, and magnify thee, my Lord God, for ever and ever.

Ph. Neighbour, take a good heart unto you, and you shall shortly see the wonderful working of God; for, behold, He that keepeth Israel, doth neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord himself is your keeper, the Lord is

your defence, the Lord shall preserve you from all evil, yea, the Lord shall keep your soul; for as he casteth down, so lifteth he up again. In this, your heavy conflict, God seems to have withdrawn the glorious beams of his fatherly grace from you; but he will straightways lighten his godly countenance upon you, and work such joy in your heart, through his Holy Spirit, as heretofore you never felt the like. And this your joy shall never be taken from you. Therefore, whatsoever Satan, that old enemy of mankind, goes about to persuade you, believe him not, but resist him with strong faith, ever remembering that he is both a liar and a murderer.

Ep. In the time of this your godly communication had with me, the Lord my God be thanked for it, I felt the heaviness, trouble, and disquietness of my conscience, by little and little to go away, and certain sweet motions of true and inward joy to arise in my heart, so that Satan now, with his wicked temptations, seemeth to have taken his flight, and the Holy Ghost, with his most godly and comfortable inspirations, to have entered into my breast. Whereas before methought I was in hell; now methinks I am in heaven, so great quietness, rest, joy, and comfort do I find in my conscience. St. Paul wished not in vain to the Philippians this tranquillity and quietness of conscience, saying, The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Again, to the Colossians, Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which peace ye are called in one body. For no man knoweth what a precious jewel and heavenly treasure this peace of conscience is, but such as feel it. Neither can any man feel it aright, except he hath felt before, the grief, pain, and disquietness of conscience. I may now right well say with the psalmist, Oh how great and plentiful is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, and that thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in thee! Oh what great troubles and adversities hast thou showed me! and yet thou didst turn and refresh me, yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again. Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side. Therefore will I praise thee, and thy faithfulness, O God.

Ph. Here you see that fulfilled in yourself, which you have often read in the Holy Scriptures; The Lord killeth, and maketh alive, bringeth down to hell, and fetcheth up

again; great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.

Ch. The psalmist saith, They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.

Ep. If the Lord himself had not been on my side, when Satan rose up against me, he had swallowed me up quick. But praised be the Lord, who hath not given me over for a prey unto his teeth. My soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and I am delivered. My help standeth in the name of the Lord, who made both heaven and earth. But, neighbour Philemon, it is good in the time of calm to provide for the tempest. I fear that Satan will shortly return unto me, and assail me with new temptations.

Ph. Indeed the property of Satan, when he cannot get his purpose one way, is to attempt some other means. But whereof are you afraid?

Ep. Christ saith in the gospel, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Again, Do this, and thou shalt live. He speaketh of fulfilling the law. And St. Paul saith, Not the hearers, but the doers of the law shall be justified before God. Moses also pronounces him cursed, who abideth not in all things that are written in the law. What if Satan should bring the law against me, and prove evidently that I have not fulfilled the law of God, and therefore I cannot enter into eternal life and felicity, but needs must be damned?

Ph. The Holy Scripture of God consists of two parts:—of the law, and of the gospel. If Satan object the law against you, lay you against him straightways the gospel. For the law was given by Moses; but the gospel, that is, grace, favour, remission of sins, truth, faithfulness, and everlasting life, came by Jesus Christ. The law maketh afraid, but the gospel comforteth. The law troubleth, but the gospel quieteth. The law uttereth sin, but the gospel pardoneth and forgiveth sin. The law declareth the fierce wrath of God against sinners, but the gospel preacheth the great and exceeding mercies of God towards penitent sinners. The law woundeth, but the gospel healeth. The law maketh sick, but the gospel maketh whole and strong. The law driveth to desperation, but the gospel ministereth consolation and comfort. The law killeth, but the gospel quick-

eneth. The law throweth down to hell, but the gospel lifteth up to heaven. Therefore, if Satan be busy, and lay the law against you, and threaten you with death and damnation, answer him with the gospel, which bringeth life and everlasting salvation. For the law was not given us of God to justify and save us; but to be a doctrine to us what we should do or leave undone, and to be a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ, that of him we might obtain that which by no means may be gotten of the law; I mean the grace, favour, and mercy of God, remission and forgiveness of sins, the quietness of conscience, a new life, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and everlasting life. Flee you, therefore, from the heavy burden of the law, which depresses and weighs down the conscience, and take on you the sweet and comfortable yoke of the gospel, and so shall you find rest unto your soul. For the yoke thereof is easy, and the burden light. After this manner, even from the beginning, have all the godly, in the conflict of conscience, fled from the doctrine of the law unto the merciful promises of the gospel. And blessed St. Peter testifies, saying, Now why tempt you God, to put on the disciples' necks the yoke which neither your fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved as they were. Our Saviour Christ said unto the Jews, Hath not Moses given you a law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?

The doctrine of the law is such a burden, that the holiest that ever lived, Christ alone excepted, was never able to bear it. No marvel, for the law is spiritual, but we are carnal. Who among us is able to say, My heart is clean, and I am free from sin? The Holy Scripture pronounces us all to be sinners, and our own consciences bear witness of the same. And how comes it to pass, not only that we do not observe the law of the Lord our God, but rather are transgressors and breakers of the same; insomuch that if our Saviour Christ had not come in the flesh, and fulfilled the law for us, even to the uttermost, and so pacified his Father's wrath, we had been damned for ever and ever. But Christ is come, and hath fulfilled the law with such perfection as the law requireth, even to the full: and his fulfilling is our fulfilling. Whosoever believeth this, and taketh Christ to be his wisdom, righteousness, sanctifying, and redemption, he cannot perish, but shall have everlasting life.

Ep. I pray you declare unto me some comfortable sentences out of the Holy Scriptures, that my conscience may be ascertained of Christ's fulfilling of the law for me.

Ph. Christ saith in the gospel, Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; no, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. All we are breakers of the law; but Christ is a perfect fulfiller of the same, not for himself, but for us; and his fulfilling is our fulfilling. The holy apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, saith, There is no damnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life, through Jesus Christ, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, inasmuch as it was weak because of the flesh, that God performed, and sent his Son in the similtude of sinful flesh, and by sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Here you see, that whereas none of us were able to fulfil the law, Christ, the Son of God, hath fulfilled it for us, and by this means delivered us from the law of sin and death. Again, in the same epistle, Christ is the perfect fulfilling of the law, to justify all that believe. So many, therefore, as do believe, are justified, and for them Christ hath fulfilled the law to the uttermost. To the Galatians he also saith, Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, inasmuch as he was made accursed for our sake. For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, &c. If Christ by his death and passion hath delivered us from the curse of the law, how then can the law condemn us? Also, in the same epistle, When the time was fully come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, and made bond unto the law, to redeem them which were bond unto the law; that we through election might receive the inheritance that belongeth unto the natural sons. If Christ became man, and was made bond unto the law, to redeem and deliver us from the law, what power then hath the law over us, that it may condemn us? If we, through the free choice of God, are admitted to be the sons of God, then are we no more slaves unto the law, nor any more bond to the subjection thereof, that it may cast us away as wicked transgressors and heirs of eternal damnation; for it is fulfilled for us in Christ. To the Ephesians he writes on this manner, Christ is our peace, who hath made of both one,

(he speaketh of the Jews and Gentiles) and hath broken down the wall that was a stop between us, and hath also put away through his flesh the cause of hatred, even the law of commandments contained in the law written, &c. Here have we the cause why God was angry with us. Verily, because we fulfilled not the law. Now Christ is come, and hath put away the cause of this anger and hatred, that is to say, he hath fulfilled the law for us, and reconciled us unto God; so that now God the Father, for his sake, hateth us no more, but loveth us; is no more angry, but well pleased with us, and accepteth his fulfilling of the law as our own fulfilling. Also, to the Colossians, Christ, saith he, hath put out the handwriting that was against us, contained in the law written, and that hath he taken out of the way, and hath fastened it to his cross, and hath spoiled rule and power, and hath made a show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them in his own person. If Christ hanging on the cross, hath, by the virtue of his passion and death, put out the handwriting that was against us, contained in the law, then is our bond made frustrate and void, and we are set at liberty; for as much as Christ by his blood hath both paid our debt unto God the Father, and also subdued and brought under foot all our enemies. The epistle to the Hebrews hath these words, The commandment that went before is disannulled, because of weakness and unprofitableness. For the law brought nothing to perfection, but was an introduction to a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God. Here are we taught also, that forasmuch as by the law no man can be made perfect, (for, who among us fulfilleth the law?) we have our perfection in Christ, by whom for our sake the law is fulfilled, and remission of sins and everlasting life are freely given unto us.

This is the hope, profit, and liberty, which so many as believe, receive in Christ. Let therefore the terrors and curse of the law never trouble you, though Satan ever so much lay it unto your charge; but remember what the apostle saith, Ye are no more under the law, but under grace. Again, Now are we delivered from the law, and dead unto it whereunto we were in bondage, that we should serve in a new conversation of the Spirit, and not in the old conversation of the letter. For if righteousness cometh by the law, then died Christ Jesus in vain. But we know, saith the apostle, that a man is not justified by the deeds

of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. And we have believed on Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by our faith in Christ, and not by the deeds of the law, because by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified. Again, As many of you as are justified by the law, are fallen from grace. We look for and hope in the Spirit to be justified through faith. For, in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision any thing worth, neither yet uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love. Comfort yourself, neighbour Epaphroditus, against the assaults of Satan, with these and other sweet sayings of the Holy Scriptures, and so shall neither the fear nor the curse of the law hurt you.

Ep. God be thanked. I trust I am now well armed against Satan for this matter. But what if he lay my sinful life unto my charge, and so burden my conscience therewith, that I know not what to do, but am like to fall into desperation? What shall I answer? How shall I escape? For I confess unto you that I have been all my lifetime a very grievous sinner, and have greatly offended the Lord my God.

Ph. Discomfort not yourself, but take a good heart unto you. You are in this in no other case than all the saints and faithful people of God have been before you, and are at this day. For all have sinned, and want the glory of God. All have gone astray like lost sheep. We are unprofitable servants. All our righteousness is as a defiled cloth. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Ep. What shall I do then, that sin may be no clog unto my conscience?

Ph. Repent that ever you offended so loving a Father, and so gentle a Lord; be heartily sorry for your misdoings; lament and inwardly bewail your wretchednesses, who so wickedly have transgressed and broken the holy commandments of the Lord. For this hearty and unfeigned repentance is a godly preparative to salvation, and without it none can be saved. Therefore, John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, began their preaching with repentance. For whosoever is not brought unto the knowledge of himself, he shall never have delight to come unto Christ. For such as think themselves whole, have no pleasure in a physician, but they that are sick.

Ep. And will God accept this my repentance?

Ph. Hear what God saith by the prophet; Whom shall I regard? Even him that is poor, and of a lowly troubled spirit, and standeth in awe of my words. The psalmist also saith, A sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise. Again, The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a troubled heart, and he will save them that are of a broken spirit.

Ep. O Lord, take away from me that stony heart which cannot repent, and give me that fleshy heart, which gladly and willingly laments her sins and miseries, and unfeignedly delights in a new life. But what? Is repentance enough?

Ph. As you earnestly, and from the very heart, do repent you of your former sinful life, so likewise humble yourself in the sight of God, and confess yourself unto him a most wicked, vile, and miserable sinner. Cry in your heart with David, and say, Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight. O turn thy face from my sins, and put out all my misdeeds. Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Cry with that lost son, and say, O Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Cry with the publican, and say, O God, be merciful unto me a sinner. Cry with the leper, and say, O Lord, if thou wilt, thou art able to make me clean. Cry out with the blind man, and say, O Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy on me. Cry with the woman of Canaan, and say, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed of the devil. Cry with the centurion, and say, I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

But unto this your hearty repentance and humble confession of your sins, you must put most mighty and strong faith, believing that God the Father, for his promise sake, made unto all penitent sinners in Christ's blood, will freely and most mercifully forgive and pardon all your sins, be

they ever so many or grievous. For, without this faith, all that ever you do is nothing worth, as the apostle saith, Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. Cain repented and confessed his fault, saying, My sin is greater than I deserve to be forgiven; but because he wanted faith, he fell into desperation, and was damned. Judas repented and confessed his sin, saying, I have sinned, betraying the innocent blood; yea, he also made satisfaction, such as it was; but notwithstanding, because he added not faith unto his repentance, confession, and satisfaction, all was in vain. Peter, his fellow disciple, sinned also grievously; but because he earnestly repented, and also faithfully believed to have remission of his sins by the precious blood of his Master, whom he before had both denied and forsworn, he was forgiven, and received into favour again. For by faith we are made of the children of wrath, the sons of God. By faith we are married unto Christ. By faith are our hearts purified. By faith Satan is overcome. By faith the world is vanquished. By faith we are preserved from damnation. By faith we are justified and made righteous. By faith the wrath of God is assuaged. By faith we work the will of God. By faith our prayers are heard, and our request granted. By faith we please God. By faith we are made the children of light. By faith we are born anew of God. By faith we are made the temples of the Holy Ghost. By faith we understand the mysteries of God. By faith we prevail against the gates of hell. By faith we are made the heirs of God, and fellow-heirs, with our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, of everlasting glory.

Ep. I believe; O Lord, help thou my unbelief. O Lord, increase my faith. O heavenly Father, my God, and my Lord, I, with an assured persuasion of thy goodness toward me, most humbly beseech thee, for Jesus Christ's sake, mercifully to behold me, a most miserable sinner, and clearly to forgive me all those sins and wickednesses which I, wretched creature, have committed against thee, my Lord God, from the hour of my birth unto this present time. Forgive me all my sins, for thy name's sake; they are both many and great. O remember not the sins and offences of my youth, but according to thy mercy think upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness. O remember not mine old sins, but have mercy on me, yea, and that right soon, for I am come to great misery. Help me, O God of my salvation, for the glory of thy name; O deliver me, and

be merciful unto my sins, for thy name's sake. So shall I give thee thanks for ever, and magnify thy blessed name, world without end.

Ph. Doubt not, neighbour Epaphroditus, but that God hath graciously heard this your humble suit, and also granted your request.

Ep. Sin is a heavy burden, and very displeasing unto the Lord our God, and makes sinners to flee from the face of God, forasmuch as they know that God hateth sin, and all them that do commit it.

Ph. I confess sin to be a heavy burden, and displeasing unto God. Yet as heavy as it is, Christ hath taken it on him, and borne it away. As the prophet saith, He hath taken on him our infirmities, and borne our sicknesses. This St. Peter declares, saying, Christ himself bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being delivered from sin, should live unto righteousness. And whereas you say, That sin makes sinners to flee from the face of God, I answer, It driveth indeed the obstinate and desperate sinners from God, but not the penitent, who repent in faith, and turn unfeignedly unto the Lord their God, being persuaded that he is the Father of Mercies, and God of all consolation, and that he, for Christ's sake, will forgive them. Do they who feel themselves sick and diseased, flee and run away from the physician? They rather make haste and speed unto the physician; being nothing at all afraid of him, because they are sick and diseased, but rather so much the more do they desire to come unto him, to show him their wounds, and to disclose their diseases, that they may be made whole. Now is Christ a Physician, and all we through sin are diseased; shall we therefore run away from Christ, and not rather make haste unto him? What physician is so ready to heal the body, as Christ our Physician to heal the soul? Whoever came to him, with a faithful and penitent heart, and was refused? Whoever sought remedy at his hand, and was not holpen? Whoever opened unto him his diseases, and was not cured? He calleth all without exception, be they ever so diseased and laden with the burden of sin, unto him, and promises that he will ease them of their burdens, and make them whole. And is it to be thought that he will refuse sinners when they come unto him? Come unto me, saith he, all ye that labour and are laden, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and you shall find rest for your souls.

For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost. How frequented he the company of sinners when he was in this world! And that to this end only, that he might call them through his godly sermons unto repentance, unto the favour of God, and unto the fellowship of the saints, so that he was called a friend of open sinners. How he always defended humble and penitent sinners against the proud and stiff-necked pharisees and justiciaries.

The. The Lord is merciful, gentle, and loving, patient, long-suffering, and of much kindness, and ready at all times to forgive; yea, even when he is at the point to punish. The Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works. The Lord is good and gracious, and of great mercy unto all them that call upon him. The Lord is full of tender compassion and great mercy, long-suffering, and of much goodness. He will not always be chiding, neither keeps he his anger for ever. He dealeth not with us after our sins, neither rewardeth he us according to our wickednesses. For, look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth; so great is his mercy also towards them that fear him. Look how wide also the east is from the west; so far hath he set our sins from us. Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him. For he knoweth whereof we are made, he remembers that we are but dust. With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

Ph. The great kindness and hearty love of God towards us, appears not only in this, that he both willingly and gladly admits and receives sinners whensoever they repent and turn unto him; but in that he also most diligently seeks them out, fetches them home again, and gives them grace to repent and turn, that they may be saved. This is very lively described and set forth in the parables of the strayed sheep, of the lost groat, of the prodigal son, and of the wounded man. Herein is love, saith St. John, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the agreement for our sins. St. Paul saith, God setteth out his love towards us, seeing that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then now, we that are justified by his blood shall be saved from wrath

through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more seeing we are reconciled, we shall be preserved by his life. (Rom. v.)

Ep. But I have many times grievously offended the Lord my God, and broken his holy commandments.

Ph. This is no hindrance unto your salvation, so that your conversion be unfeigned. All go astray. There is none good but God alone. All our righteousnesses are as a defiled cloth. If God should deal with the most holy and most perfect according to their deserts, they should find nothing in themselves but what deserved damnation. David, with very many others of the Old Testament, oftentimes sinned and offended God with their wicked acts; yet forasmuch as they repented and unfeignedly turned unto God, they were received into favour and saved. The publican was without doubt a grievous sinner, and had many times broken the commandments of God; yet as soon as he humbled himself before the throne of God's majesty, and appealed unto his mercy, he was received into favour, and pronounced of Christ's own mouth, more righteous than the pharisee, for all his glistering works and outward holiness of life. If the favour of God be promised at all hours, to such as unfeignedly turn unto their Lord God, and seek him in singleness of heart, then it follows that if hearty repentance come, there is hope of remission of sins through the blood of Christ. If Christ be an everlasting Bishop, then he is able at all times to save, even at the full, those who come unto God through him. If Christ goeth forth, to be called Jesus, that is to say, a Saviour, then he ceases not to save sinners. If Christ be our Intercessor, Mediator, and Advocate unto God the Father, even unto the world's end, then may we assure ourselves, through him, to have remission and forgiveness of all our sins, even unto the end of the world. Therefore, though you have many times grievously offended the Lord your God, and broken his holy commandments, yet despair not, but turn again unto the Lord your God, and he will turn unto you, deliver you, and save you. For he is the Father of Mercies, and God of all consolation. He is rich enough for all them that call upon him. If you do thus, though your sins be red as scarlet, yet shall they be as white as snow. And though they were like purple, yet shall they be as white as wool. Whom would not these words encourage to come again

unto the Lord his God, and thoroughly be persuaded of God's loving favour towards him, and of the forgiveness of his sins, be they ever so many and grievous, if he repent, believe, and amend?

Ep. These things comfort well my weak conscience. But one thing greatly discourages me. I have no merits, nor plenty of good works wherewith I may make God favourable to me; but I am a barren fig-tree, void of all good fruit.

Ph. The want of merits ought not to keep you from coming unto God. God saveth us not for the righteous works which we have done, but for his mercies' sake. If our salvation came of works and merits, then were grace no more grace. If everlasting life were gotten by deservings, then were it not the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But the apostle saith, By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, and cometh not by works, lest any man should boast himself. If righteousness come of the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And we are taught in the gospel, that joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. What had the wounded man deserved, that he should be healed? What had the strayed sheep merited, that the shepherd should so lovingly fetch it home again? What good works brought Mary Magdalene, when Christ received her unto grace, and forgave her her sins? and so likewise of many others. If God should save us because of our merits and good works, so should we choose God by our works and merits; and God not us, by his favour, grace and mercy. But Christ saith, Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. And St. John, wondering at this great mercy of God, bursts out into these words, and saith, Behold what love the Father hath showed on us, that we should be called the sons of God. Again, Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the agreement for our sins. Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and forget not his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine iniquities; who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness. All good men, from the very beginning, have attributed and given the whole glory of their justification,

not to their own merits and good works, but to the free grace and undeserved mercy of God, that God may be all in all; and that he who rejoices should rejoice in the Lord.

For the contentation and quietness of your conscience in this behalf, remember that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Remember that Christ is a physician, and that the whole have no need of a physician, but such as are sick. Remember that Christ calleth unto him all such as are diseased, and laden with the burden of sin. He requireth no merits, only "Come." Remember that the Son of man came to seek and to save that that was lost. Remember that Christ is called a Saviour, that he should save them which otherwise should perish. Hear also what God saith by the prophet Isaiah, Come to the waters, all ye that are thirsty, and ye that have no money, come, buy, that ye may have to eat. Come, buy wine and milk without any money, or money's worth. Wherefore do you lay out your money for the thing that feedeth not, and spend your labour about the thing that satisfieth you nothing? But hearken you rather unto me, and ye shall eat of the best, and your soul shall have her pleasure in plenteousness. Incline your ears, and come unto me; take heed, I say, and your soul shall live. Our Saviour Christ also saith, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. Again, in another place, I will give to him that is athirst, of the well of water of life. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. Also, let him that is athirst come, and let whosoever will, take of the water of life freely. Here is the favour of God, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, quietness of conscience, and everlasting life promised freely without merits or deserts, to so many as will come unto Christ with a repentant heart and faithful mind. For, Christ was sent of God the Father to preach good tidings unto the poor, that he might bind up the wounded hearts, that he might preach deliverance to the captive, and open the prison to them that are bound, declare the acceptable year of the Lord, and comfort all them that are in heaviness. He came into this world to save sinners. Therefore let it not dismay you, though you find in yourself a great many sins, and good works very few. Cast rather the eyes of your mind with strong faith on Christ and on his righteousness, on his merits, passion, and death, on his blessed body-breaking, and his precious

blood-shedding. Believe him to be ordained of God the Father, to be your wisdom and righteousness, your sanctification and redemption, that, as it is written, He that rejoiceth should rejoice in the Lord. Count all your merits, good works, and righteousnesses vile and of no price, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Labour to win Christ and to be found in him, &c. (Phil. iii.)

Ep. I have earnest faith in the blood of Christ, that God the Father will forgive me all my sins for Christ's sake.

Ph. You thus believing cannot perish; but this your faith is an undoubted assurance unto your conscience, that you are predestinate to be saved. For it is written, God hath so dearly loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved by him. He that believeth on him is not condemned; he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into damnation, but is escaped from death unto life. This is the Father's will that sent me, that of all which he hath given me I shall lose nothing, but raise them up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And every man that liveth and believeth on me shall never die. To him, Christ, gave all the prophets witness, saith St. Peter, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive in him remission of sins. If thou acknowledge with thy mouth, that Jesus is the Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him up from death, thou shalt be saved. (Rom. x.) For, to believe with the heart, justifieth; and to acknowledge with the mouth, maketh a man safe. For, the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be confounded. (Isaiah xxviii.) Thus you see, that faith assures your conscience of the favour of God, and of everlasting life. Doubt you nothing therefore but that you are accounted in the number of God's elect and chosen people, and shall inherit the glorious kingdom of God.

Ep. As I have had many times an earnest and fervent

mind to come reverently unto the Lord's Table, and to be partaker of the holy mysteries of Christ's body and blood with the congregation; so likewise have I at all times been glad to repair unto those places where the word of God hath been preached; and I marked diligently the doctrine that hath there been taught, kept it in memory, and to the uttermost of my power, I laboured to frame my life according unto the same; that I might not be a forgetful hearer, but a diligent doer of those works, which I learned of the Holy Scriptures to be acceptable unto the Lord my God, that I might serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Ph. As there is not a more evident testimony, or surer argument that a man is in the state of everlasting damnation, than that he has no mind to hear the word of God, nor to train his life according unto the doctrine thereof; so likewise is there not a more certain sign that any man is predestinate to be saved, than when he has a mind to hear the word of God, as our Saviour Christ testifies, saying, He that is of God heareth God's word; ye therefore hear it not, because ye are not of God. Here, see you how Christ puts a difference between them that are of God, and them that are of the devil. They that are the children of the devil, have no mind to hear the word of God; but they that are the sons of God have a fervent delight, and a singular great pleasure to hear God's word; yea, and as the prophet saith, to exercise themselves in it day and night. In another place, our Saviour Christ saith also, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them everlasting life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. In this sentence, ye see that they which hear the voice of their Shepherd Christ, are the sheep of Christ, and that they shall never perish, but have everlasting life. Christ also said unto Pilate, Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice. You having a mind to hear the word of God, and to hear the voice of Christ that high Shepherd, have showed yourself to be of the truth; so being, you cannot perish, but obtain everlasting life. For Christ himself pronounces them blessed, which hear the word of God, and keep it; that is to say, believe it, and study to frame their life according unto the same.

Ep. God be thanked, I am now well quieted in my conscience, and fear Satan nothing at all. I think myself

at this present so strong, and so thoroughly armed against the devil, and all his wicked army, that I am nothing afraid to enter battle with him; but am fully persuaded, that, by the help and power of my great captain, Jesus Christ, I shall overthrow him. One doubt remaineth, and that once despatched, I trust I shall be in some readiness for the Lord my God, whensoever he sends for me, and calls me out of this wretched world.

I have heard many times at the mouth of divers men, which have a good opinion of themselves, of their own understanding, doctrine, and learning, that no man in this world is certain of his salvation; neither can any man say with a safe conscience and undoubted faith, I am of the number of God's elect, I am a vessel of mercy, I shall be saved, my name is registered in the book of life, &c.; but that all men, even the most godly and faithful, must doubt of their salvation, of the remission of their sins, of the favour of God towards them, and of everlasting life.

Ph. This is the doctrine of the papists, both wicked and damnable.* The papists in teaching this doctrine, do not only trouble, disquiet, make afraid, wound, kill, and slay the consciences of the simple people, and of such as credit their devilish doctrine; but, as much as in them lieth, they make God a liar, his holy word false, and our faith frustrate, void, and vain. Take away the certainty of salvation from any man, and to what point serves the merciful promise of God, and the faith which apprehends and lays hand on the most loving promises of God? This doctrine opens a path unto hell, and brings unto desperation.

Ch. Yet the papists allege the Scriptures for them.

Ph. So is their accustomed manner. They allege many times the Scriptures of God, to defend and establish their errors and heresies, and to blear the simple people's eyes, who are not able to discern A from B, nor to judge between truth and falsehood; but are easily led that way, whereunto the subtle and wily papist persuades. If I had leisure to declare unto you, what juggling the ungodly papists have used, and yet do use, in writhing and wresting, in corrupting and abusing the holy word of God, ye would not a little marvel at the matter; but I would gladly hear what the papists can allege out of the word of God, for the confirmation of their wicked opinion in this behalf.

* See the Decrees of the Council of Trent, On Justification.

Ch. The sentence whereto they stick and cleave, as unto an invincible bulwark, is this, A man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred; but all things are kept uncertain unto the time to come. Eccles. ix.

Ph. The kingdom of the papists is not without a cause called the kingdom of lies, &c. (Rev. xiii.) But as concerning the text which they allege—although the learned in the Hebrew tongue know right well how greatly this text, after the common Latin translation, differs from the truth of the Hebrew—it is abused of them, and wrested contrary to the mind both of the author and of the translator; as the words that immediately follow manifestly declare. When Solomon saith, A man knows not whether he be worthy of love or hatred, he speaks not of the knowledge and judgment of the conscience towards God; for, who is there that knows not, that he is worthy of hatred who sinneth against the Lord his God? Contrariwise, that he pleases God, and God loves him who doth that which is pleasant in his godly sight? But he speaks of the outward and carnal judgment and knowledge which men have of themselves; of their own strength, wisdom, or freewill, concerning things that befall them outwardly. As though he should say, If a man should only behold and consider the outward face of things, and judge the favour or disfavour of God towards any man, by the things that outwardly befall any man, he were not able to affirm, and to persuade his conscience, whether God loves him or not.

For God indifferently, without any respect had to either of the parties, gives as abundantly to the ungodly as to the godly, to the unfaithful as to the faithful, to the saints as unto the wicked, his temporal and outward gifts; as beauty, strength, riches, health of body, reason, wisdom, eloquence, honour, nobility, wealth, glory, &c. Yea, many times the enemies of God, have more plenteously given unto them of God, the riches and pleasures of this life, than the friends of God. Therefore if a natural man, not being regenerate, nor born anew of the Spirit of God, considers the outward face of things, and judges by them the favour or disfavour of God; verily, so knoweth he not who is worthy of God's love or hatred; so is he not certain whom God loveth, or whom he hateth. Thus is the aforesaid text of Solomon to be understood. And that this is the meaning of the author, the words that follow manifestly declare. It happeneth, saith he, unto one, as unto another; it goeth with the right-

eous, as with the ungodly; with the good and clean, as with the unclean; with him that offereth, as with him that offereth not; like as it goeth with the virtuous, so goeth it also with the sinner; as it happeneth unto the perjured, so it happeneth unto him that is afraid to be forsworn. Among all things that come to pass under the sun, this is a misery, that it happeneth unto all alike.

By these words it evidently appeareth, that Solomon speaks of the knowledge which a natural man hath by the outward gifts of God; whereby, because they are indifferently given, as well to the good as to the bad, he is not able to judge whom God loveth, and whom he hateth. Now, where the papists wrest this text unto the knowledge or judgment of the conscience, which comes of the Spirit of God, and of his holy word, and would that Christian men in their conscience should doubt whether God love them or not; whether they be in the favour of God or not; whether their sins be forgiven them or not; whether they shall be saved or not; they teach a devilish error, and lead the receivers of their doctrine the right way to hell. For, he that doubteth of the merciful good will and favourable grace of God towards him, and believeth not that God, for Christ's sake, is loving unto him, and forgiveth him all his sins, verily he is no true Christian; but dying in this doubtfulness and unbelief, he shall surely be condemned, according to this saying, He that doth not believe in the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. This erroneous doctrine of the papists, makes God false to his promise, quenches faith, blots out hope, destroys love, disquiets the conscience, fills the heart with whole seas of unquiet and wicked imaginations, and so drives the doubtful person unto desperation, and finally unto damnation. O murderers! O soul slayers! If no man can be certain in his conscience, whether he be in the favour of God or not, whether God, for Christ's sake, will forgive him his sins or not, and give him everlasting life; to what end serve all the promises of God's tender mercies made to all faithful penitent sinners in Christ's blood? To what end doth faith serve? If faith certifies not our conscience of God's good will toward us, and so brings peace and quietness unto it, what is then the office of faith?

If a man, whose credit is approved, promises us anything, we surely look for it, and nothing doubt of the performance thereof; and shall we doubt of the accomplishment of the

promises of God, who is faithful in all his words; who cannot lie; who is not only true, but also the very Truth? Let all men be liars, and let God abide true. God hath promised that at whatsoever hour we turn to him, he will forgive us all our sins, and never remember them more, but so freely favour us, and so tenderly love us, as though we had never offended him. This is the promise of him who can neither deceive nor be deceived; and shall we doubt of the performance thereof? Shall we doubt whether the Lord our God will be as good as his word? whether our sins be forgiven, and we received again into favour or not? God hath promised, that in Christ all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; and shall we, who look for our whole salvation in the blood of Christ, doubt whether we shall be blessed in Christ, that is to say, favoured of God the Father for Christ's sake, or not? Christ our Lord and Saviour calleth all that labour and be laden to him, and promises that he will ease, comfort, and help them; and shall we doubt of this his promise?

What other thing is it to doubt of the promises of God, than to doubt whether God be true, or not, just and faithful or not, and the same in his deed that he is in his word or not? The Scripture saith, He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life. The faithful Christians believe on Christ the Son of God, embrace him with strong faith, as their only Saviour, Redeemer, Atonement-maker, Intercessor, Mediator, and Advocate; and shall they doubt of the inheritance of everlasting life? Either they that believe and so continue unto the end, have everlasting life at their departure out of this life, or else God is not true to his promise. But God is faithful in all his words; therefore the faithful Christians receive according to God's promises, and their faith. If all things be possible to him that believeth; if all things happen to a faithful man according to his faith; with what shameless forehead dare they teach us to doubt of the grace and favour of God, of the remission of sins, and of the inheritance of everlasting life? Where doubtfulness is, there is no true faith, but rather misbelief. And to such a doubting faith, yea rather no faith, nothing is promised, but the fierce wrath and vengeance of God, and everlasting damnation. St. James saith, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of him that giveth it; even God. But let him ask it in faith and waver not. For, he that doubteth, is like a wave of the sea, which is tossed of

the winds, and carried with violence; neither let that man think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A wavering-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Are not they that profess Christ much bound to the papists, who teach their scholars to doubt of the merey of God; and not to be thoroughly persuaded in their consciences that God loveth them, pardoneth them for Christ's sake, and maketh them inheritors of everlasting glory? Is this any other thing than to say, Despair, die, be damned? O God, enlighten the eyes of the simple, that they may once see the juggling casts of these wily papists, and come unto the unfeigned truth of God's word, which is able to save their souls; which also is the mighty power of God, to save every one that believeth.

All the godly, even from the beginning, have believed the promises of God; and nothing doubted of them, whether they concerned temporal or spiritual things; and according to their faith, so received they. Yea, when God seemed most to be angry with them, and utterly to cast them from his favour, even then did they not doubt of his merciful goodness, but with strong faith cleaved to the promises of God. As a certain man saith, Though he kill me, yet will I put my trust in him. (Job xiii.) The psalmist also saith, Though a host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid; and though there rise up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him. If either Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or any other saints of the Old Testament, had doubted of the promises which God made unto them, they never had found favour at the majesty of God, nor obtained those things which God hath promised them. For, without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. xi.) He that doubteth of the promises of God, shall obtain no good thing at the hand of God. To what end are we so often, in the Holy Scriptures exhorted to believe God in his promises, if it were lawful for us to doubt of them? If to believe and to doubt are the same thing, why is everlasting salvation promised unto the one, and eternal damnation to the other? Whosoever therefore will be saved, let him cast away all unbelief and doubtfulness, and most firmly cleave to the promises of God; nothing doubting, but according as God hath promised, so shall it be unto him. If we repent, and believe his word, God hath promised us, for Christ's sake, to favour us, to forgive us all our sins, and to bring us to

everlasting life. Let us not therefore doubt of this his promise, but with strong and unshaken faith believe it, and look boldly for what is promised. So may we be sure to have the grace and favour of God, to have remission and forgiveness of our sins, and finally to have everlasting life. Let us therefore approach with boldness, and not with doubting and wavering, unto the throne of God's majesty, as the apostle warns, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need. Heb. iv.

Ch. If a man, after the doctrine of the papists, should doubt of the grace and favour of God towards him, with what conscience could he be bold to say the Lord's prayer, and to desire the forgiveness of his trespasses? Or how could he say with a true faith, I believe the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life? To believe, is it to doubt of the promises of God? or rather to be thoroughly persuaded of the promises of God, that as God hath promised, so shall it undoubtedly befall us?

Eu. When a man believes the gospel, he is certain of the remission of his sins; he is certain of the favour and good will of God; and he is certain also of everlasting life. And he that lets go this faith, and falls to doubting, he shall never enjoy the aforesaid benefits.

The. This the holy apostle considered right well, when he, without any doubting, being thoroughly persuaded and assured of God's good will towards him, set forth in his holy promises, said in this manner; I know and am sure, that He, in whom I have put my trust, is able to keep that which I have committed to his keeping against that day. Again, I have fought a good fight; I have fulfilled my course; I have kept the faith. From henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, who is a righteous judge, shall give at that day, not to me only, but unto all them also that love his coming.

Ph. When David said these words, I believe verily to see the pleasure of the Lord in the land of the living; doubted he of the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom? or was he rather thoroughly persuaded, by strong faith in the promises of God, that he should without all doubt reign with God in glory? If the godly apostle St. Paul had not been sure of the favour of God, and of a better life after this, would he have wished to be delivered from this world, and to be with Christ? With what countenance durst the blessed martyr St. Stephen have commended his spirit

unto Christ, if he had not been persuaded of God's favour towards him, and of the joyful inheritance of the everlasting kingdom? And so likewise of all the other saints. The Spirit of God certifieth our spirit, saith the apostle, that we are the sons of God. If we are the sons, then are we also heirs, I mean of God, and fellow heirs with Christ. Hereto agrees the saying of St. John, Dearly beloved, now are we the sons of God, and yet it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Again, We know that we are translated and carried from death to life. Here you see that the Holy Scriptures teach us to be certain of our salvation, through faith in Christ's blood, and not to be doubtful of it. Away therefore with all doubtfulness, and lay hand by strong faith on the promises of God, looking, with assured hope, on all those heavenly and blessed things that God hath promised us in his holy word. So may we be sure to receive according to our faith.—You thus believing cannot perish. Therefore be of good comfort, quiet your conscience, and settle your mind. For it is written, He that believeth on the Son of God, hath everlasting life.

Ep. Brother Philemon, I thank you and my other neighbours here, for the great comfort which I have received by this your godly communication. I feel myself now in much better case than I was when you came first unto me; I feel much quietness and ease in my conscience. The Lord hath driven away mine enemies, and given me rest in my mind. I feel such inward joy in my heart, and such a fervent desire to see the Lord my God face to face, that the pains which I now suffer in my body, although they are very grievous indeed, seem little or nothing to disquiet me. For I am fully persuaded, that the afflictions of this life are not worthy of the glory which shall be showed upon us. (Rom. viii.) Again, that though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; and that this our tribulation, which is short and light, prepares an exceeding, and an everlasting weight of glory unto us, while we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. iv.)

I am as willing to leave this world, and all the vanities thereof, as ever I was to receive them; and give God most

hearty thanks, for all the great mercies that he hath poured upon me from my birth unto this present time, and especially for his Christ.

Ch. God keep you in this mind even unto the end.

Ep. Confirm and make that perfect, O Lord, which thou hast begun to work in me, unto the glory of thy blessed name, and to the salvation of my soul.

My pain approaches nearer unto my heart, whereby I perceive the end of my life not to be far off. I beseech you pray for me, that I may continue faithful, constant, and steadfast in the faith of the Lord my God.

Ph. We will do it gladly. Let us kneel down and pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, thou only Son of the heavenly Father, our only Redeemer and all-sufficient Saviour, we most humbly beseech thee, deliver this sick and weak person now being in great pains, and at the point to depart out of this world, from all terrible assaults and temptations of the devil, sin, and hell. Deliver him, O Lord, as thou deliveredst Noah from the raging waves of the sea, Lot from the destruction of Sodom, Abraham from the fear of the Chaldees, the children of Israel from the tyranny of Pharaoh, David from the hand of Goliath, the three men from the violence of the fiery furnace in Babylon, Daniel from the mouth of the lions, Jonah from the belly of the fish, and Peter from the prison of Herod. Even so, O gracious Lord God, deliver the soul of this person, both now, and whensoever he shall depart hence, from all peril and danger. Open unto him at the hour of death, the door of paradise, the gates of heaven, and the entry of everlasting life. O Lord Jesus Christ forgive him all his sins, and lead him with joy into the kingdom of thy heavenly Father, unto the bosom of Abraham, and appoint him to everlasting rest, that he may rejoice with thee, and with all the elect children of God in everlasting life. Amen.

Ep. Neighbours, I thank you. Now will I also pray unto the Lord my God, while I may speak; and I trust he will, for Christ's sake, graciously hear me.

The. Doubt you not, neighbour; God hath so promised.

Ep. Lord, hearken unto my prayer, and give ear to my most humble requests. O most merciful God, O Father of all mercies, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be merciful to me a sinner. Have pity on me, and quickly help me, poor wretch, for the most bitter passion and most precious death of Jesus Christ, thy only begotten

Son, and our only Redeemer and Saviour. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord. Handle me not according to my deserts and merits, neither reward me after mine iniquities; but, for thine infinite and unmeasurable bounty and exceeding great mercy, receive me, and take me into thy favour. I, miserable and weak creature, am in thy hand. I am thy bond-servant and thy debtor. O most gentle God, O most favourable Father, forsake me not, cast me not away, poor wretch that I am. For I am thine with all that ever I can make. No man is able to strengthen me, no man is able to deliver me, no man is able to help me but thou alone. Thou art the true helper in adversity. Thou art the most sure and present comforter in all necessity. Thou alone art our helper, our bulwark, and fortress, and our most mighty and strongly defenced tower. Thou, O God, art our refuge, thou art our strength. Thou art our helper in all our tribulations. In thee O Lord do I trust. Let me not be confounded. Let me never be put to shame. Let me not be deceived of my hope, but preserve me, for thy righteousness sake. Bow down thine ear unto me, make haste to deliver me. Be my defender O God, and my strong hold, that thou mayest save me. For thou art my strength and my refuge; yea, and thou art my God; and my destinies are in thy hands. Lighten thy countenance upon thy servant, and save me for thy mercies' sake, O Lord. And forasmuch, O sweet Father, as it is thy godly pleasure to call me now from this miserable life, and wretched world; I most entirely beseech thee, so to defend me in this agony of death, that neither Satan nor his ministers prevail against me; but that I continue faithful and constant unto the end in the confession of thy holy name, looking for full remission of all my sins in the precious blood of thy well-beloved Son, and my only Saviour, Jesus Christ; and that I, departing in this faith and perfect trust, may be placed among the blessed saints and heavenly spirits, and so for ever and ever remain with thee in glory. Grant this, O most merciful Father, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

Methinks, I begin to wax very cold in my limbs.

Eu. Sir, discomfort not yourself. Be content with the good working of our God. This cold is a sure token that the death of your body is not far off.

Ep. My flesh is consumed and wasted away.

Eu. That is the end of all flesh. Earth thou art, saith God, and unto earth thou shalt return.

Ph. Let the care of the body and of the bodily things pass. You do believe the resurrection of the body?

Ep. I believe that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise out of the earth in the latter day, and that I shall be clothed again with this skin, and see God my Saviour in my flesh; yea, I myself shall behold him, not with other eyes, but with these same eyes. This hope is steadfastly set in my heart.

Ph. Believe this earnestly, and it shall not grieve you to depart from your body. For, whereas it is now mortal, corruptible, sick, weak, vile, and loathsome, it shall at the general resurrection be immortal, uncorruptible, whole, strong, precious, and in all points like to the glorious body of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. Hear what the apostle saith, Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that he may make it like his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able also to subdue all things unto himself. Again, We know that if our earthly mansion of this dwelling were destroyed, we have a building of God, an habitation not made with hands, but everlasting in heaven. For it therefore sigh we, desiring to be clothed with our mansion which is from heaven; so yet, if that we be found clothed and not naked. For we that are in this tabernacle, sigh and are grieved, because we would not be unclothed, but would be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. He that hath ordained us for this thing is God, who hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always of good cheer, and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are absent from God. For, we walk in faith, not after outward appearance. Nevertheless, we are of good comfort, and had rather be absent from the body, and be present with God.

Ep. I leave this my vile body willingly, yea, and with this hope, that at the last day, I shall take it again immortal and incorruptible. I believe the resurrection of the flesh. I wish to be loosed from this body, and to be with Christ.

God be praised for that true joy and singular comfort which the faithful find in his holy word. It is not without a cause said of the holy apostle, The eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the

heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. My heart is so inflamed with the desire of those heavenly and blessed treasures, which are set forth in the infallible and true word of God, that I most entirely wish to be loosed from this life, and to enjoy those joyful pleasures.

Eu. We rejoice, good brother Epaphroditus, and give God most hearty thanks, that he hath by his Holy Spirit wrought so good and glad will in you to die, and to leave this wretched world.

Ep. In my body I am weaker and weaker; but I trust in my soul stronger and stronger. I pray you lay me up higher in my bed; for I begin to wax very faint, and my breath decreases and waxes shorter. I thank you neighbours. I am troublesome to you; but, I trust, I shall not be so long.

The. It is unto us great joy and comfort to be with you, being so godly minded. For in you, as in a clear mirror, we behold ourselves, and see what shall become of us hereafter. Of you, as of a living schoolmaster, we learn how we shall behave ourselves, when God layeth the cross on us. And we most humbly beseech God to give us the like patience and thankfulness.

Ep. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Forasmuch as I feel in myself present tokens of death, and am not certain how long the Lord will suffer me to live, or enjoy the use of speech, I think it convenient to pray again unto the Lord my God, and to commend my sinful soul into his merciful hands. Lord vouchsafe, I most humbly beseech thee to hear me, sinful creature.

The. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, yea, that call on him in truth.

Ep. O Lord Jesus Christ, who art the only health of all men living, and the everlasting life of them that die in thy faith; I, wretched sinner, give and submit myself wholly to thy most blessed will. And I, being sure that the thing cannot perish which is committed unto thy mercy, most humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to give me grace, that I may willingly leave this frail and wicked flesh, in hope of the resurrection, which in better wise shall restore it to me again. I beseech thee, O most merciful Jesus Christ, that thou wilt by thy grace make strong my soul against all temptations, and that thou wilt cover and defend me with the buckler of thy mercy, against all the assaults of the devil. I see and acknowledge that there is in myself no

hope of life and salvation; but all my confidence, hope, and trust is in my most merciful goodness. I have no merits nor good works, which I may allege before thee. Of sins and evil works alas, I see a great heap; but through thy mercy I trust to be in the number of them to whom thou wilt not impute their sins, but take and accept me for righteous and just, and to be the inheritor of everlasting glory. Thou, O most merciful Lord, wast born for my sake. Thou didst suffer both hunger and thirst for my sake. Thou didst preach and teach, thou didst pray and fast, for my sake. Thou didst all good works and deeds for my sake. Thou sufferedst most grievous pains and torments for my sake. And finally, thou gavest thy most precious body to die, and thy most blessed blood to be shed on the cross for my sake. Now, most merciful Saviour, let all these things profit me, which thou hast freely given me, which hast given thyself for me; let thy blood cleanse and wash away the spots and foulness of my sins; let thy righteousness hide and cover mine unrighteousness; let the merits of thy passion and blood be the satisfaction for my sins; give me, Lord, thy grace, that my faith and persuasion in thy blood waver not in me, but ever be firm and constant, that the hope of thy mercy and life everlasting, never decay in me, that charity wax not cold in me. Finally, that the weakness of my flesh be not overcome with the fear of death. Grant me also, O most merciful Saviour, that when death hath shut up the eyes of my body, yet the eyes of my soul may still behold and look upon thee, and that when death hath taken away the use of my tongue and speech, yet that my heart may cry and say unto thee, O Lord, into thy hands I give and commit my soul; Lord Jesus, take my spirit.

Eu. Sir, how is it with you now?

Ep. Even as with a ship that is tossed with the waves of the sea; I trust shortly to come unto the haven, and then shall I be quiet, and without all danger. Pray for me.

Ph. Most gladly. Let us kneel down, neighbours, and beseech the Lord our God, for his tender mercies, to preserve this our sick brother from the assaults of Satan, and to keep him constant and steadfast in his faith unto his life's end, that he may give up a good and faithful soul into the merciful hands of God. (They pray for him.*)

* See, in the Flower of Godly Prayers, the prayer for those who are at the point of death.

Ep. O God, be merciful unto me, and bless me, show me the light of thy countenance, and deal favourably with me, lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him. For, if I be cast down, they that trouble me will rejoice at it. But my trust is in thy mercy, and my heart is joyful in thy salvation.—My bodily sight is gone.

Ph. The Lord gave it you, and the Lord hath taken it away again; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it come to pass; blessed be the name of the Lord. Now that God hath taken away the sight of your corporeal eyes, behold the Lord your God with the eyes of your faith, and doubt you not but that shortly you shall see the glorious majesty of God with the eyes of your soul, even as he is, face to face; which shall be unto you such joy and so great comfort, that no tongue is able to express, nor heart to think it.

Ep. I believe, and am assuredly persuaded, that I shall see the pleasure of the Lord in the land of the living.

Ph. Continue in this faith unto the end; and you shall surely be saved.

Ep. All my other senses decay.

Ph. Although by the appointment of God you lose your bodily speech, yet shall your soul in the heavenly kingdom sing, praise, and magnify the Lord your God, world without end. And albeit the bodily hearing be taken away from you, yet shall your soul in the kingdom of God hear such sweet, pleasant, and delectable things as never mortal men heard, nor may hear the like. Again, although your going, and the use of your whole body be taken away from you, and your body return unto the earth from whence it came, yet doubt not but your soul, being once delivered out of the prison of your body, shall serve the Lord your God perfectly, and joyfully follow the Lamb Christ whithersoever he goeth.

Ep. O Lord, deliver my soul out of the prison of the body, that I may come unto thee, and glorify thy holy name.

Ph. Be of good comfort, sir. God in this your trouble and bitter agony of death is present with you, and when he seeth convenient time, he will deliver you out of all your pains, take you unto him, and place you in his glorious kingdom.

Ep. Be thou my protector, O God, and house of defence, that thou mayest save me. Be thou my strong rock, and my castle; be thou my guide, and lead me for thy name's sake. Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

Ph. Fear not, brother Epaphroditus, God is your loving Father, and most gentle Saviour. He hath heard your humble requests, and granted your petitions. He hath and will defend you from all evil, even unto the end. He will not suffer you to be devoured of the devil. He hath sent his holy angels hither unto you. They are here present for your great comfort. They have pitched their tents round about you, that they may keep you harmless and safe from the devouring teeth of Satan. They wait upon you diligently for your defence, and will never depart from you till they receive your soul, and carry it up lovingly, a most precious relic, into the kingdom of heaven, and there most joyfully present it unto the glorious throne of God's majesty. Fix the eyes of your faith on Christ and Christ's merits, on Christ's passion and death, on Christ's blessed body-breaking, and his most precious blood-shedding, on his triumph and victory over Satan and his hellish army; believe Christ to be your only good Saviour, and all his works to be your good works, and so shall you not perish, but have everlasting life.

Ep. Haste thee, O Lord, to deliver me. In thee, O Lord Christ, my most mereiful Saviour and only Redeemer, in thee, in thee alone is all my trust, let me never be confounded. O Jesus, mercy, Jesus, mercy; O Christ, mercy; Christ, mercy. O God the Father, O God the Son, O God the Holy Ghost, Most blessed Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy on me. Receive my soul into thy hands, place it for thy mercy's sake, in thy heavenly kingdom, among thy holy angels and blessed saints; O God, my good God; O Father, O my most merciful Father, mercy, mercy.

Ph. God the Father, who made you, bless you; God the Son, who redeemed you, preserve you; God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth you, confirm and strengthen you. The blessing, defence, and saving health of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, preserve you from all evil, and bring you unto everlasting life.

Eu. Methinks he hath given up the ghost.

The. No, he is yet alive, God comfort him. Lord, show him the light of thy countenance.

Ep. When shall I appear before the presence of my God?

Ph. God be thanked, he yet speaketh, yea, he speaketh godly. Brother Epaphroditus, take a good heart with you, shrink not. Fight a good fight. Be not discouraged, neither with the terrors of Satan, nor with the pains of

death. God is on your side, God is your great Captain, you fight under the banner of that most mighty and victorious emperor, Jesus Christ. Only continue as you have begun, and the day is yours. Satan with all his army, like miserable cowards, shall be put to flight and vanquished, you shall have a joyful victory over them. The pain of the battle is short and light; but the glory of your triumph shall abide for ever and ever. Hear what your great Captain saith, He that continueth unto the end shall be saved. To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. Yea, to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my seat. Only believe, only fix the eyes of your faith on Christ crucified, only engrave in your heart deeply, a sure and undoubted confidence in the merciful promises of God the Father, which he hath made unto you in the precious blood of his dearly-beloved Son and our only Saviour Jesus Christ, and you shall most certainly have the victory, and obtain the reward of joyful immortality. Hear what your great Captain, Christ, saith; God hath so dearly loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that every one that believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved by him. He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life. My sheep, saith Christ, hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them everlasting life, neither shall they perish for ever, nor yet shall any man pluck them out of my hand; my Father who gave them to me is greater than all, and no man can pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Again, I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. I am the way, the truth, and the life. Follow Christ, and you cannot err, nor go out of the way, for he is the way. Believe Christ, and you cannot be deceived, for he is the truth. Abide and remain in Christ, and you cannot die the death everlasting, for he is the life. Wherefore, O most dear brother, cleave with strong faith to these most sweet and comfortable promises of Christ our Saviour. Believe to obtain whatsoever

is promised, so may you be sure to be God's son, and heir of his everlasting kingdom, never to perish, but to have eternal life.

Ep. I believe to have remission of all my sins through faith in Christ's blood. Lord Jesus, take my spirit. O heavenly Father, I commend my spirit into thy hands.

Eu. The life of this our brother draws unto an end.

Ph. Yea, rather he now begins to change a mortal life for an immortal life. The life that is led in this world is rather a shadow of life, than a very life indeed. Now, brother, be strong in the faith of Christ. Remember Christ crucified. Remember Christ to be your only Saviour. Remember God the Father to be your merciful Father. Forget not that all your sins are washed away in Christ's precious blood, and that by the virtue of his death and passion you are made an heir of everlasting salvation. Brother, if you can speak, answer; if you cannot speak, show some outward sign and token, that it may be a testimony unto us of your steadfast faith and godly departure.

Ch. Lo, he holdeth up his hand. God be thanked.

Ph. He seemeth yet to hear. Persuade yourself, dear brother, that God even now calleth you out of this vale of wretchedness unto the joyful inheritance of his everlasting kingdom, where you shall not miserably live with sinful men, as you have done in this world, but you shall gloriously reign with that most mighty God, and with his holy angels and blessed saints. Now beginneth your joy, your solace, your comfort; now beginneth your true life which shall be everlasting; now is the end of all your sorrows come, and now beginneth your unfeigned joy and true felicity. Now shall you see the glorious majesty of God face to face; now shall you behold and perfectly know all the godly that have been from the beginning of the world, and rejoice with them; now shall you see our Saviour and elder brother Christ, as he is; now shall you be clothed with the white garments of immortality; now shall you have a crown of gold set upon your head; now shall you eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, and drink of the fountain of living water; now shall you be a pillar in the temple of God, and sit with him on his seat, and these your joys shall be everlasting, and never have end. Unto these joys shall you straightway go, and for evermore enjoy them.

Th. Our brother is departed from this world unto the Lord our God. As you spake the words, "Unto these joys shall you straightway go, and for evermore enjoy them," he gave up the ghost, and now resteth in the Lord.

Ph. The Lord our God be praised, our brother hath made a godly end. He hath given up a good spirit into the hands of the living God. He is, I doubt not, of the number of them, of whose death it is written, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Blessed are they that die in the Lord. He lived justly and uprightly with his neighbours. He was friendly to all godly men, and enemy to no man. He was both a sincere favourer and a diligent follower of God's most holy word. He abhorred all errors; notwithstanding, always praying for their amendment who were in error, that they, acknowledging their errors, might with us confess one God, and one truth in the unity of the spirit. He was a dear friend to such as were studious of good letters, to widows, to the fatherless children, to poor young maids' marriages, to young men that had not wherewith to set up their occupations, to the prisoners, to such poor people as were not able to get their own livings, to poor householders, to the repairing of highways, and such like; his end also ye know.

Ch. A Christian and godly end made he; God give us all grace to make the like.

Ph. Of a good life cometh a good death; if the departure of the godly may be called a death, and not rather a passage unto a better life. Well, his body now sleepeth in the Lord, and his soul reigneth in glory with God.

Eu. God grant him and us all a joyful resurrection.

Ph. Neighbours, before we depart, let us all kneel down, and give God the Father thanks for the godly departure of this our Christian brother.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

A NEW CATECHISM,

Set forth as a dialogue, in familiar talk between a father and his son.

Of this catechism, or general statement of Christian doctrine, which extends to more than seven hundred and fifty folio pages, Becon thus speaks:—"I have written a new catechism, both long and large, wherein I have comprehended the sum of the Holy Scripture; so that in the one book the Christian reader shall easily find whatsoever is necessary to be known, whether doctrine or manners be considered."

The work is divided into six parts: 1. Of Repentance; 2. Of Faith; 3. Of the Law; 4. Of Prayer; 5. Of the Sacraments; 6. Of the Offices (or duties) of all degrees. It is in fact a library of Christian divinity.

The word catechism Becon explains to signify, "a doctrine taught of the wise and learned, to the younglings of Christ's religion, in which, after a brief goodly order, is comprehended whatsoever is necessarily required unto the right institution of a Christian man, so that whosoever hath and understandeth this doctrine, hath and understandeth the whole sum of all things necessary unto salvation, contained in the Old or New Testament."

The first part, Of Repentance, is briefly but fully explained from Scripture. The second, Of Faith, embraces a full exposition of the Creed. The third, Of the Law, explains the ten commandments. The fourth, Of Prayer, shows what is true prayer, and its efficacy; here Becon treats of the Lord's Prayer, largely illustrating the doctrines of gospel truth. In the fifth part, he treats of the Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, exposing the errors of popery at considerable length. In the sixth part, Becon treats of the Office and duty of the temporal magistrate—of the ministers of God's word—of deacons—of subjects—of parishioners towards their pastors—of husbands and wives—of parents and children—of masters and servants—of widows—of unmarried women—of aged men and women—of schoolmasters—of scholars—of rich men—of poor men—and lastly, of all degrees and estates generally.

Upon each of these subjects Becon enlarges with much earnestness and close application of the Scriptures.

THE

DEMANDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE,

WITH ANSWERS TO THE SAME, WHEREIN ARE DEFINED AND DECLARED THE CHIEF AND PRINCIPAL POINTS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE; VERY PROFITABLE FOR THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. NEWLY COMPILED, AND NOW FIRST OF ALL PUBLISHED

BY THOMAS BECON,

A. D. 1563.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.—Matt. vii.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of Him that giveth it; even God, who giveth to all men indifferently, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, and waver not; for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, which is tossed of the winds, and carried with violence. Neither let that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A wavering minded man is unstable in all his ways.—James i.

Be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, and that with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that whereas they backbite you as evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.—1 Pet. iii.

Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not how thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me, gold tried in fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that thy filthy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.—Rev. iii.

THE

DEMANDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.*

Who did create us? God; who also made all the world of nought. Gen. i. Psal. cxlvi. Acts xvii.

What thing damned us? Sin; inasmuch as Adam did eat, by the persuasion of Eve, of the apple forbidden him of God. For sin is the breaking of the commandments of God. Gen. iii. Rom. v. 1 Tim. ii.

Who redeemed us, and set us in the favour of God again? Jesus Christ, by taking our nature on him. Rom. v.

What is God unto us? Whereas before he was a severe and strict Judge; through Christ he is become our most loving, tender, and merciful Father. Eph. i. ii.

What are we? His dearly beloved children. Col. i.

What is God? An infinite substance, who only by his word of might did create and make all things, and with his most high and incomparable wisdom governs all things, and of his inestimable goodness suffers and preserves all things. I call that infinite which has neither beginning nor ending, and that which cannot be comprehended nor compassed by man's reason what thing it is. And in both these significations God is infinite. Furthermore, that is to every man god, or a god, which he loves, dreads, and worships with all his heart. The Scripture also calls the judges and officers of the earth gods. Exod. xxii. Psalm lxxxii.

What is a strange god, or another god? Whatsoever thing we worship besides the true living God. And that also which alienates and turns our heart from God's word is called a strange, or another, god.

* In the dedication of this treatise to the mayor of Sandwich and his brethren, Becon says, "To help forward some point of godly doctrine to be taught in your newly-erected school, after I had finished this little treatise, I thought it not unfitting, nor unworthy of our friendship, to dedicate the same to you, and so by you to commend it to the Christian youth of your school. In it they shall learn to know and understand the principal and chief points of God's doctrine, so that by this means they shall be able to render a reason both of their faith and doctrine which they profess, and not be like horses and mules which have no understanding. The book is little, if the number of leaves be considered; but if the matter thereof be diligently pondered, it shall be found both great and profitable.

What is faith? It is a full and perfect confidence and trust in God, through Christ, engendered in our hearts, by hearing the word of God, and, as Paul defines faith, Faith is a sure confidence of things which we look for, and the certainty of promises. Rom. x. Heb. xi.

What is hope? A stiff and firm expectation of such things as are promised us of the word of God.

What is charity? The principal fruit of faith, a prompt and ready will to do good to our neighbour. The works of mercy also are called charity. Matt. xxv.

What is the law? It is the lively will of God, given us by commandment, as well in the New Testament as in the Old; whose work and operation is to show sin, to show that God is angry with us for our evil doing and daily transgression of his commandment; whose duty is to accuse us in our conscience, to cast us down and make us seem vile and nothing worth in our sight; and by this means it either brings us to utter desperation, or else leads us, as it were, by the hand to Christ, the only true pacifier of the conscience. John vii. Rom. vii. 2 Cor. iii. Gal. iii.

What is the gospel? It is glad tidings. Or else you may call it, every promise that God made of Christ, and of his other good benefits; whereby the clouds of the conscience are put away, and man's mind is raised up and made joyful, whether these promises be in the New Testament or in the Old. Paul saith, It is the power of God, whereby all that believe are brought to health and safety. Rom. i.

What is it to be a godly man, or who is godly? He or she that has faith and the fear of God before their eyes.

Who is wicked, or ungodly? He or she that believes not the promises of God, and has not the dread of God before them.

Who is a Christian man? He that believes on Christ, and lives according to his word.

Who is a heathen, or miscreant? He that uses not those laws and ordinances, and has not the faith that we have. Or else he that seeks to be saved by some other means than by Christ.

Who is a heretic? He that thinks and stiffly maintains any thing against the doctrine of faith, that is to say, the word of God. Mark here, the word of God is called the doctrine of faith, because faith draws her principles from nowhere else than from the word of God. Because she only learns, marks, and bears away the word of God.

What is the kingdom of heaven? It is where the word of God is truly preached and received, and where it bears fruit meet for the doctrine whose king and Lord is Christ.

What is the world? A heap and muster of men, without the word of God, among whom the word of God is despised and persecuted, where is a rabblement of all vices, whose prince and god is Satan. In some places it is called a hot boiling sea, which cannot rest and be assuaged.

What is the word of God? It is the decreed sentence, word, and will of God, expressed and left by the prophets and apostles to us, in the canonical books of the New Testament and the Old; which word, he that receives, that is to say, acknowledges in his heart to be true and holy, and lives according to it, receives God; and he that refuses it, despises God, and, as much as lies in him he makes God a liar. The word of God has sundry names in Scripture, as the sword of the Spirit, a two-edged sword, a fiery sword, an iron wall, a strong-hold, a well-fenced tower, a consuming fire. It is also called wheat, the rod of the mouth of the Lord, the breath of the mouth of the Lord, a mystery, an oracle, the print, or secret will of the Lord. Eph. vi. Heb. iv. Jer. xxiii.

What are man's traditions? Whatsoever man's reason has or does imagine without the word of God, and ordains and wills it to be reputed and taken as good, godly, and pleasant in the sight of God. They are called in Scripture, cockle and chaff. Of these Christ speaks, where he saith, They do serve me in vain while they teach such doctrines as are nothing but the commandments of men. Mat. xiii. Jer. xxiii. Matt. xv. Mark vii.

Who are good? Only God is good. Notwithstanding because all they that have the Spirit of God, and are ruled by his word, are of the flock of God, and under his keeping, therefore God doth communicate and impart his goodness to them, and so they are called good, as their Father, Lord, and Governor is.

Who are evil? They that have not the Spirit of God, nor are ruled by his word; whether they live upright outwardly, and according to the letter of the law, as Cato, Socrates, and they that are counted good and virtuous among the Turks and Jews, or else they that are open transgressors of the law. For in Christ only is salvation and remission of sins. And unto that time that our sins are remitted, we are evil, unclean, and under condemnation.

And on this fashion we are all evil and sinners by nature. Acts iv. Eph. ii.

Who is just or righteous? He that hath faith; for through faith we are justified. To be justified is to have our sins not imputed unto us, but to have them forgiven in Christ, and for Christ. Even as David saith, Blessed are they whose unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is that man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin. Now because the faithful man alone receives and enjoys this mercy, forgiveness, and this no imputing of sin through faith, therefore he is called just; and we, through faith, are said to be justified. Sometimes in Scripture the hypocrites, and they that think to be saved by their works, are called just, or righteous, as we read, I came not for the righteous, &c. Psal. xxxii. Rom. iv. v. Gal. ii. iii.

Who is unrighteous? He that has no faith.

What is everlasting life? It is the taste of the favour and manifold mercies of God, the peace of the conscience, a fervent desire of heaven, and to be with Christ, which the Holy Ghost kindles in the hearts of the faithful. Otherwise, everlasting life is called, to know the very living God, and Jesus Christ whom he sent down. As it is said, He that hath the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life. John v. xvii.

What is everlasting death, or hell? In this life it is the perpetual grudge and horrible fear of conscience, the distress and tediousness of the mind, dreading the wrath of God, which the devil increases in the unfaithful, as it is plainly declared. Also hell is taken for extreme temptation, which almost leadeth us down to desperation; as we read, The Lord leadeth us down to hell, and bringeth us up again. After this life, it betokens the fire of hell, where the damned souls are. It is called also a fiery furnace, and the utter darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth, and utter desperation of the mercy of God. Isa. lxvi. Rev. xxi. Matt. xiii. xxii. xxv.

What is the blessing of God? It is the favour, the grace, the help, and beneficence of God, &c.

What is the curse of God? It is the anger, extreme wrath, and the lack of all the good benefits of God.

What is a good conscience? It is the peace of the mind a spiritual joy, and a plain feeling and perceiving of the goodness of God towards us, through faith in Jesus Christ;

which is described and set out, and is no more to say, but that when we perceive that through faith in Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven, and that we are in the favour of God, we are heart-whole, joyful, and sound. Rom. v. Isa. lvii.

What is an evil conscience? It is an inward boiling heat and tossing of the mind for a man's wickedness, and when for pure anguish, at the sight and horror of sin, the heart faints and fails him. It is called in Scripture the worm of conscience.

What is verity and truth? Christ himself; the word of God; and whatsoever else agrees with the word of God. For, as Christ saith, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Also, Thy words are the truth. There is also a civil truth or verity, as it is called, and that is, when any thing agrees with that which is said, and when we find words agreeing with the thing itself. John xiv. xvii.

What is leasing or falsity? Whatsoever thing is an enemy to, and not agreeing with the truth and word of God; as man's traditions or doctrines, that serve not to the same word of God.

What is the fear of God? Such a humbleness and lowly behaviour, as dutiful sons have towards their loving fathers. It is also a ready, glad, and wilful wariness in ordering ourselves, that we do not commit anything against God and his word, for fear lest we should offend so loving and tender a Father. Which fear, as it springs only out of faith, so it is only in the faithful. Then we fear God wisely, when with heart and mind we so endeavour to live and order ourselves, as if we had God for a witness and looker-on of all our deeds, words, yea, of our secret thoughts and cogitations. This loving dread engenders wisdom, and brings God's blessing on us, and drives sin out of the breast. The servile and bond-fear is the amazement, dread, and abashing of the mind, that wicked men have of the wrath of God, engendered by laying the law to their evil living. Rom. vii.

What is contempt of God? A despising or a light regarding of the doctrine and the commandments of God, proceeding of an unclean heart and wicked mind, a pleasure and delight in sin and ignorance, the root of all mischief, which fruit of incredulity God never left unpunished; as it appears in Exodus, Numbers, &c.

What is thanksgiving? It is a remembrance, and a

thankful acknowledging of the benefits of God; when we surely think all that we have comes from him. It is called in Scripture, Sacrifice of praisegiving. Psal. l.

What is unkindness and secret murmuring against God? It is to grudge and not to be content with the works of God, and to forget his beneficence. Examples hereof we read Exod. xvi. xvii.

What is it to have the Holy Ghost? To be godly disposed, to have a heavenly burning in the mind, ever upright, whole, sincere, and pure; virtuous, always judging the best, willing and wishing well to every body, the fruits of whom are all virtues; which ye may see Galatians v.

What is an evil mind, or to have the devil? It is to have an evil cankered mind, to be against God and his word, to be given to all wickedness, to misdeem and judge all to the worst.

What is a good angel? The messenger of God, or whatsoever by which God worketh for us, and in us, that which is good, profitable, and commodious.

What is Satan, or an evil angel? An adversary and enemy of God, a worker of all mischief and death unto us. Otherwise it is put only for the devil.

What is the cross? It is all manner of grievance, given to every manner of vocation and kind of life, grounded on faith and the word of God; and when that which we do goeth not forward as we would. It is also the teaching, warning, chastising rod, and staff of the Lord, which names are to be seen in the Proverbs and Psalms. The cross of Christ is his passion, or sufferings, and the preaching of the same, and the persecution that follows the preachers and believers of the same.

What is pleasure and the ease of this life? It is when we have all at will, when God leaves us to ourselves, and troubles us not with any adversity, for faith and the word of God.

What is sin? It is the transgression and breaking of any of God's commandments. It is also a natural propensity and inclination to wickedness, engendered with us at our birth. Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. It is also the distrust in God, and the ignorance and contempt of him, and a trust and confidence in our own works.

What is original sin? It is the poison and corruption that we have in our birth, through the infection of our nature in Adam, which brings forth in us the fruit of

incredulity and all wickednesses; and makes us unable to perform the works of the law, as the law requires them to be done by us; until Christ and his word make us new creatures.

*What is original justice?** The integrity, wholeness, and soundness of the powers of the body and the soul, whereby both the soul and the body could verily obey, do, and fulfil the law of God. Wherefore, after the poison of sin entered, nature lost her integrity and soundness, and the venom of sin made weak, faint, and feeble, the whole nature of man; so that it could not in anywise will or do the work, that it wholly could do before. And not only this, but it infected and corrupted the flesh and the soul, and all the powers of them both; which infection engendered in the nature of man, it being thus enfeebled, the ignorance and contempt of God, the distrust of God, and the murmuring against God when he sends adversity or sickness. Furthermore, it causes man to be without the fear of God, to hate the judgment of God, to flee and run away from God when he chastens us, to be angry with him and despair, and to trust in things corruptible, &c. These are the horrible boils, sores, and carbuncles that disfigure the face of man; which, though they be ever so plain, yet our schoolmen and canonites, (I mean the professors of the bishop of Rome's laws,) could never see nor perceive them. These Christ, through faith, at our baptism, doth suppress and abate their power,† and at the last by death utterly vanquishes and kills. Rom. v. 2 Cor. iv.

What mean ye by these words, Pœna and Culpa? This word *Culpa*, which is in English a fault or trespass, properly, in this place, betokens the guilt, as we call it, of the trespass, and that which the law punishes in the deed or fact; as in an act of felony, the law punishes not the coming to the horse, nor yet the bridling, no, nor the leading of the horse from the stable, meadow, or common, for all these may be done without the evil and unlawful desire of the horse, and even with the owner's leave. But the law punishes the coming, the bridling, and taking away

* Or *Righteousness.*

† Becon elsewhere says,—The "water (of baptism) certifies our faith of the inward washing and cleansing of our souls by the Spirit of God; a token of our regeneration, of the mortification of our flesh, of our burial with Christ, and of our resurrection unto a new life. 1 Peter iii. Titus iii. John iii. Rom. vi." See also the note, p. 424.

the horse against the owner's will, and with the mind of stealing him, and calls that fact theft or felony. This word *Pœna*, which is in English pain, is the wages and punishment taken for the fault. And thus some kinds of vices, all hurts, damages, sicknesses, pestilences, perils, errors, and the lack of God's word that we have among us, are pains and punishments of sin. That God punishes sin with loss and danger both of body and goods, with sickness, pestilence, and such other, none I think doubt; but that he punishes sin by sin, and sin by errors and heresies, the world cannot so clearly perceive. Howbeit Paul doth plainly declare it, where he saith, Because the Gentiles turned the glory of God, and worshipped the creature more than the Maker; therefore, saith he, God gave them up unto shameful lusts, &c. And this punishment, I mean, to punish sin by sin, is a very sore punishment. Romans i.

He punishes sin by errors thus. When the word of God is plenteously and sincerely preached, as it is now, and yet men still kick against it, or in case many receive it, yet few or none regard it, or live according to it, but with their words make use of it only for fleshly liberty; then, I say, God takes his word away from thence, (as though they be not worthy of it,) and suffers the world to prevail against his preachers, and suffers antichrist, who must needs succeed Christ, to kill them, so that antichrist peaceably enjoys his kingdom, (as he has done already this great while,) and he must needs have doctrine like unto himself. So did God punish the Jews his own elected people, at sundry times, more than two thousand years, and suffered them to worship false gods, or else to set up their own traditions, God's precepts being neglected. So also hath he punished our forefathers these eight or nine hundred years. And now, except we thankfully receive his word, and live thereafter in the newness of life, according as we are called, no doubt, he will not only revolve and cast us down again to our old ignorance, captivity, and bondage, but also shortly take such vengeance on us, as he threatened to Bethsaida, Chorazin, &c. Matt. v.

Now God remits the crime, guilt, and trespass to his elect through faith in Christ, but he reserves, after a certain manner, a little portion of the pain, not to counterpoise therewith, or satisfy his justice for the crime, (as the bishop of Rome with his accomplices hath taught us this

great while,) but to chastise their flesh withal, and sometimes to be an example unto others to forbear like crimes, for fear of like punishment, or to declare the ire of God for such crimes. So that whatsoever trouble, vexation, grief, loss, or sickness, the best men that are have, they deserve it, with much more. Howbeit God would not thus beat, scourge, and try his children, if it were not for their own profit and avail. For by this means he nurtures, reins in, and humbles his elect, that they may know themselves the better, and lest they run at large after the world; as it appears by the adultery of David, and many other histories in the Bible. 1 Cor. xi. 2 Sam. xii.

What is innocency? The pureness of the mind, and when the conscience is not guilty, nor finds itself culpable in anything. This innocency, only faith in Jesus Christ engenders in us. In this state was Paul, according to many interpreters' minds, when he said, I know nought by myself, &c. He said not this, that he thought not himself a sinner, and that he trespassed not before God, for then had he been a liar; for Moses saith to the Lord, It is thou that takest away trespass, iniquity, and sin, and none is innocent before thee—but he meaneth of his conversation. In this state also was Hezekiah, the good king, when he turned to the wall and wept. Here we mean, that not to be guilty or culpable, is to have the peace of the conscience; and that is when we believe through Christ that our sins are hid, for unto that time the law ceases not to accuse us in our conscience. 2 Cor. i. ii. 1 John i. Exod. xxxiv. 2 Kings xx.

What is the spirit? It is a heavenly sense or understanding, springing out of the word of God, or else the word of God itself, exceeding the sense of the flesh and reason; as, The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and life, meaning they amount and pass the flesh and sense of reason, they are spiritual and heavenly. It is sometimes put for whatsoever lives and breathes, as, All spirits, praise ye the Lord. Sometimes for the breath and wind. John vi. Psal. cl. John iii.

What is the flesh? Every affection; the heart, the mind, and thought of man, and whatsoever else, man doth or can do by all the powers of his reason, destitute of the word of God. For Christ saith, That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; that is, it understands not things that are spiritual. Flesh elsewhere betokens the letter, and fleshly

understanding. The flesh profiteth nothing, it is the spirit that quickeneth. John iii. 1 Cor. ii. John vi.

What is the new man? It is the man that is renewed and born again by faith and the word, through the Spirit of God. Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. By this saying, To be born anew, Christ meaneth that, whereas before we were but carnal and fleshly, not understanding the mysteries of the Spirit, we must be born again in spirit, that is, become spiritual, and more able to understand spiritual things. John iii.

What is the old man? Our affections, appetites, and understanding according to reason, without faith. Even that state wherein we are all naturally born of our mother; as appears in divers places of the Scripture. Also the whole body of sin is called the old man in Scripture; and they live according to the old man, who live in ignorance and follow the lusts of their hearts, not walking in the newness of life. Psal. li. Eph. ii. Col. ii.

Who is blessed or happy? Albeit I may answer with Christ, Blessed is he that heareth and keepeth the word of God; yet he is also otherwise defined in the Scripture. He is to be thought happy, who holds himself well content with his fortune, and thankfully receives whatsoever God sends him, and who is at one with God and all creatures, that is, who does not murmur against God, and on the other side neither envies nor despises any man. Luke xii.

Who is wretched or unhappy? He that holds not himself content with that which God has sent him. He with whom nothing goes forward; and who agrees neither with God nor man.

Who is poor? He that can make no great boast of himself, and who is destitute of all help, as are they of whom Christ saith, Blessed are the poor in spirit. In Scripture he is called low, humble, and hungry, and he who is now in adversity. Matthew v.

Who is rich? He is called rich in Scripture, who needs no help concerning his salvation, but believes that he has works enough, and more than enough, to bring him to heaven. And, as a man may call it, is full up to the throat of his own righteousness, as are all hypocrites, pharisees, and justifiers of themselves. They also are called rich, in Scripture, who are proud, mighty, and drunken with fortune and prosperity, ever polling* the poor. Luke i. vi. xvi. James v.

* Oppressing, defrauding.

Who is wise and circumspect? He who knows God and his word, who, when he doubts, asks counsel, and does all things thereafter.

Who is a fool? He that rashly is carried hither and thither, with every motion, that considers nothing, regards nothing, nor suffers himself to be corrected and warned of his evil-doing, but runs headlong as he began, caring not whether he sink or swim, or what becometh of him; and who, as he knows not the word of God, so he cares not for it. The wisdom of God, taken as foolishness by the world, is the preaching of the cross of Christ, and the justifying by faith; that is to say, though to suffer persecution for the word of God, and to preach that we are justified by faith, be godly, and the wisdom of the Spirit, yet the world laughs it to scorn, and counts it great foolishness. The wisdom of the flesh is foolishness before God. 1 Cor. iii.

What is a child, or to be a child? A child in Scripture is a wicked man; or he that is ignorant and not exercised in godliness and God's word, be he old, or be he young; or he that has not spiritual judgment in discerning and choosing things,—Wo be to the country whose king is a child. And, He shall die a child of a hundred years old. By a child also is sometimes meant one who is humble or meek. Whosoever humbleth himself as this child, is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Ecclesiastes x. Isaiah lxv. Matthew xviii.

What is an old man, ancient, or elder? He who is well taught and instructed in the word of God, and exercised therein. He who lives honestly and without reproof, having hoariness of manners, authority, gravity, and high knowledge of the word of God.

What is Christ? The anointed king and priest of God, sitting on the right hand of the Father; having full power to defend and warrant* his flock, and being a ready Advocate for his people at their need. And by him all Christian men are anointed kings and priests. They are called kings, when in Christ and through Christ, they subdue their wild affections, the devil, and death. They are called priests and sacrificers, when they offer up their bodies a lively, holy, and acceptable sacrifice unto God, which is our reasonable serving of God. Exod. xix. 1 Peter ii. Rom. ii.

What is Antichrist? The adversary of Christ, and he which goeth about to obscure, or utterly to abrogate and

* Assure.

pull away his glory; teaching, defining, and determining that Christ is not the King, Priest, and Advocate of his flock.

What is prayer? A burning desire or petition of the mind, lifted up and directed unto God, springing out of, and coming from, the need and want that we find in ourselves, as far as faith and the promise of God suffers and permits us; where mark that we ask such things as are honest and lawful. Sometimes it means the lifting up of the hands, the desire, crying, and sighing of the poor, and such as stand in need. And some call it more generally, the lifting up of the mind to God.

What is temptation? The proof and trial of our faith, and an exercise and practice of the word. Otherwise it is called the rod and staff of the Lord, and the discipline whereby we see ourselves, and perceive how we have profited and gone forward in the word, which may best be tried when what we go about does not go forward as we would.

What is desperation? It is when in temptation and such trying of us, whether it be by adversity or any other thing, we fall down, distrust, and cast away all hope of the mercy and goodness of God. Then, I say, when on no side appears any hope or succour, and when we are, as seemeth to us, utterly forgotten and cast away of God. Of which temptation we may see a manifest example. (Job vii.) To speak properly, desperation is the utter and final despair and distrust of help.

What is vocation or calling? It is the manner of life, unto which God hath called thee; or else the appointment by common consent, as mayors and other officers; or else what thou hast appointed and purposed thyself unto of thy own accord. Or you may call it every kind of life, in which we exercise faith and charity. To be called to the kingdom of heaven, is to hear the word of God. To be chosen or elected, is to believe it. Matthew xx.

What is predestination? It is the secret election of the wisdom of God to eternal life, without our deserving. They are predestinated and called to everlasting life, who hear and receive the word of God. Romans ix. x. xi.

What is free will? It is the liberty that man hath in doing outward things, and the natural work of man in such things as are not spiritual; as in ordering himself after a civil and political fashion, and outward fulfilling of the moral virtues. Howbeit he hath not the power, no nor yet the will to love God, to fear God, and to know him, until he be

renewed, and that Christ has set him at liberty. For then, as John saith, If the Son hath made you free, then are ye free indeed. For unto the time that we know God, we cannot love him, nor fear him. And when we love him, and fear him, then have we power, through him, to keep the law. Yet when man was in the state of original justice, that is to say, when he had the integrity, wholeness, and soundness of the powers of the body and soul, then might he obey, do, and fulfil freely the law of God; but after the poison of sin entered, it made weak and feeble the whole nature of man. John viii.

What is the temple of God? A pure, clean, and single heart, without all guile, fraud, and doubleness. Also the church wherein God is worshipped. 1 Cor. iii. 2 Cor. vi.

What is the church or congregation of Christ? It is the company, assembly, and consent of good men on the word of God, and in the faith of Jesus Christ.

What is the church of Satan? It is the multitude of wicked men conspiring against God and his word.

What is the sabbath-day, or to keep holy-day? It is to abstain from the outward works of the flesh, and to pray unto God in spirit, hear his word, and to have our minds set on his law, after the manner true Christians ever keep the law; or you may say, that the holy day is that wherein we remember the benefits of God, and give him thanks for them. Isaiah lvi.*

* In Becon's Catechism, he thus explains "What it is to sanctify the Sabbath-day."—"Not to spend that day idly in wicked pastimes, banquetting, carding, dancing, pleasures of the flesh, &c.; nor yet in bargaining, buying and selling, as they do which run to fairs and markets on the Sabbath-day;—but, all such madnesses and wickednesses laid aside, and the mind utterly sequestered from all worldly things, and the body free from all servile works, to address ourselves, and to apply our whole mind and body unto godly and spiritual exercises; as unto the consideration of the mighty power of God in creating all things both in heaven and in earth, yea, and that of nothing, through his word, for the welfare and the advantage of man. Again, unto the consideration of God's unspeakable goodness in preserving and maintaining those his creatures for the use and profit of man. Also, unto the humble and reverent hearing or reading of God's holy word; unto the faithful and diligent calling on the name of God by fervent prayer; unto unfeigned and hearty thanksgiving to God for his benefits, no less diversely than plenteously declared unto us; unto the worthy receiving of the holy mysteries of the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus; unto the visiting, counselling, comforting, and helping of the poor and miserably afflicted persons; unto the utter giving over of all the studies, devices, and works of the old man; unto the earnest embracing of the fruits of

What is grace? The good will of God towards us, his favour and bounteous goodness, freely employed on us without our deserving.

What are merits and works? They are called and counted in Scripture to be the refusing and contempt of the favour of God, and a confidence to be saved by a man's own power, strength, and deserts.

What is the name of God? It is whatsoever pertains to God, or else every name which we assign unto God and call him by, as the God of hosts, the strong and jealous God, &c. Also his glory, honour, and majesty. To show the word of God, is to preach sincerely the gospel, that is to say, that all who believe have their sins forgiven them, that they are delivered from death and hell, and have given them everlasting life freely through Jesus Christ.

What is to serve God? To live according to his word, to believe and put trust in him, to refer all things unto his glory, and to love and help our neighbour.

What is it to serve the devil? It is to resist the word, to serve mammon, his belly, his fleshly appetites, the world, and carnal affections.

What is to worship God? It is not only to pray unto him, but also to show and exhibit in the outward gesture, honour and reverence unto him.

What is it to believe in God? It is wholly to commit a man's own self in all matters to him, and to have a sure hope in himself, that whatsoever God promises shall be performed.

the Spirit; and, in fine, unto the whole giving over of ourselves unto the good will of God, to work in us by his Holy Spirit whatsoever his blessed pleasure shall be, that he alone may live, rule, reign, and triumph in us."

Becon then quotes many texts which enforce the keeping holy the Sabbath-day, and explains why we are free from the observance of the seventh day, the Jewish sabbath, and are bound to observe the first day of the week, the Christian sabbath, which he says is to be observed of the Christians, not only spiritually, but also corporeally, except some grave, weighty, urgent, and necessary cause persuade to the contrary; that by this means they may learn the better to exercise themselves in matters of God and godliness, and seek by that temporal rest, how they may attain unto the perpetual rest of the world to come. Becon then quotes Matt. xii. 1—8. Hosea vi. 6. Mark ii. 27. Gal. iv. 9. Col. ii. 16. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. iv. 9. John iii. 36, as explaining what is the sabbath of the Christians which he considers to be spiritual and everlasting, not to be observed one day in the week only, after the manner of the Jews, but every day so long as we live, by ceasing to do evil and by studying to do good, as it is written in Isaiah lxvi. 23.

What is it to fast? To beware lest we overload our body with surfeiting in meats or drinks; that we live chastely and soberly; to abstain from vice; to keep our body low, giving it that only which is necessary. Luke xxi.

What is to follow Christ? It is to believe in him, to mark and follow his doctrine, and to follow him whithersoever he leadeth us or calleth us, and to suffer willingly whatsoever he layeth on us.

What is to leave and forsake all that a man hath, to sell all, and to deny a man's self? To leave, forsake, and sell, is to repute and reckon such things as we have as none of ours, yea, gladly to forsake and leave for Christ's sake, if the matter come to that point, wife, children, parents, country, house, land, and all other such. Insomuch that if need required, we would, for Christ's sake and the gospel's quarrel, offer ourselves to all dangers, and death at the conclusion. To deny a man's self is, frankly and freely to grant, that his works and all his other good endeavours are unable to his salvation, and utterly to kill the old Adam in him, with all his affections.

What is it to visit? When it is taken in the good part, it betokens that God looks upon, and sends his benefits some where.—The Lord hath visited his people. When it is taken in the evil part, it betokens that the Lord punishes and scourges the wicked and cursed, when he takes vengeance on them for their wickedness; as, I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the sin of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, &c. Luke vii. Exod. xx.

What is the hand of God? It is the power or strength of the Lord, whereby he helpeth, and doeth good unto the godly; and whereby he worketh mischief and taketh vengeance on the cursed. The arm of God betokens his power...

What are the eyes of God? The respect, care, and regard that he has upon the good, and his gentleness, mercy, and readiness to defend them. His countenance, is taken for the strait and narrow looking to the wicked for their destruction and perdition. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears attend unto their prayers. But the countenance of the Lord is upon the sinners.* His face betokens favour, benevolence, and gladness in the Lord. But as soon as thou hast turned thy face, they shall be confused, and will turn again unto their earth.

* In the old English version of the Scriptures, *countenance* is used for *face*. See Psal. xxxiv. 16.

The mouth of the Lord hath great vehemeney and pith in it; for the prophets when they will have their words marked and regarded, say, The mouth of the Lord hath spoken this. The outward appearanee of any thing, also is ealled the faee. Judge not aecording to the face and outward sight. The face of the anger of God, is the feeling of the curse and wrath of God. Also the presence, sight, and judgment of God are ealled his faee, as, Let all the earth hush, or be still, before the faee of the Lord. As the wax consumeth in the face of the fire, so shall all sinners perish before the face of God. Psal. xxxiii. eiii. Isa. i. Habak. ii. Psal. lxvii.

What is the eye of man? It is reason, or the eye of the flesh. A single eye is reason instrueted with the word of God. A wieked eye is reason depraved and eorrupt, and envy engendered against a neighbour for the gifts of God. Otherwise, the eye, right hand, foot, &e., betoken our kinsmen and best beloved friends. Matt. v. xviii.

What betoken feet in Scripture? The feet are and betoken the affeetions, desire, and will of the heart. My foot stood straight forth; that is to say, I have neither hurt any man, nor would hurt. And though perchance I have hurt any, yet I willed none evil, nor hated any one. To wash one another's feet, is one to love another, and to wish well one to another. Psal. xxvi.

What is a slander, to offend, or to be offensive to any man? It is that whereby the faith or eharity of our brother is offended or hurt. The faith of the brother is offended, when any man preaches and teaches other things than the word of God. Of this kind of slander Christ speaks, Whosoever offendeth one of these little ones, &c. The eharity of our neighbour is offended or hurt when we help not the poor, when we are not glad at our neighbour's prosperity, and sorry for his adversity. It is the obstaele or hindrance, whereby we fall and stumble in the way of the Lord, that is to say, we have not a life upright and worthy of the Lord; I mean, when we stagger in the faith or love towards our neighbour; in which two, every Christian ought stoutly and still to walk, forgetting, with St. Paul, the things that are behind our baeks, endeavouring to eome to the mark set before our eyes. Otherwise slander or offending, is taken in Seripture for the offending whereby the wicked cannot bear the word. Matt. xviii. Phil. iii. Matt. xiii. xv.

What is a hypocrite? It is the wicked man, coloured and cloaked with godliness. Wherefore hypocrisy is called feigned holiness.

What is an envious man? He whose heart burneth for anger at another man's prosperity, nor can suffer, with his will, any other to be enriched with the benefits of God. So did Cain envy Abel his brother; Saul, David; and Joab, Amasa. But John did not envy Christ his successor, when he said, He must increase, and I decrease. And Jonathan, Saul's son, did not thus hate David, his loyal and trusty friend and companion. Gen. iv. 1 Sam. xviii. 2 Sam. xx. John iii.

What is it for God to sleep? When he seems to us to forsake us in our temptation, nor helps us. So slept Christ in the ship, his apostles being in danger and jeopardy. And so David calls upon God to awake, saying, Arise and wake Lord, why dost thou sleep so long? Matt. viii. Psal. xliv.

What is it for men to sleep? When they, without any care of the word of God, slug and sleep in sin and ignorance; when they refuse, contemn, and regard it not. To rest or sleep in the Lord, is to die in faith. Matt. xiii.

What is it to be awake? To exercise and put in use the word of God and our faith.

What is fortune? It is fate or destiny befalling any man by the will of God, without man's providence.

Who is my brother? He that has one Father with me, that is to say, God. Matt. xxiii.

Who is my weak brother? He that has one faith with me in God, and favours the gospel; but yet wavers and doubts in his conscience of some things, as meats, and difference of days. Rom. xiv.

Who is my neighbour? He on whom I exercise charity and love, or he who needs my help. Luke x.

Who is a lord or master? He that has a servant, and governs and rules another. As he who keeps under vices and wicked appetites is lord and master over them, so through faith in Jesus Christ we are lords over the devil, death, and sin. Also he that uses the sabbath or holy day as he seeth need; that is to say, who doubts not, if he see the love of his neighbour requires the contrary, to break it; that man, I say, is the lord of the Sabbath day. Mark ii.

What is a servant? He that has a master and is not his own man; or else he that is at the beck and commandment of another. Thus Paul calls himself the

servant of Christ; as he that doeth and accomplisheth the will of sin, is a servant to sin. John viii.

What is a true and faithful servant? He that has faith, and does his duty with all diligence, according to his vocation and calling. Matt. xxiv.

What is a slothful and unfaithful servant? He who believes not in God, negligently orders himself in his vocation, and refuses to bear his cross.

What is an officer or ruler? Every lawful power among men, ordained of God, to the defence and protection of that which is good, and to prohibit and to punish that which is evil, according to right and equity. Rom. xiii.

What is a tyrant? An unlawful and unjust ruler, who administers all things as he lists, and lays great burdens and yokes upon the people, doing against all conscience and equity. Such a one was Pharaoh to the children of Israel. Howbeit such are not to be resisted by Christian men, but obeyed in all things, save where they will have us do that which God forbids us, and will have us not do that which God bids. And we must tarry till God deliver us out of such tyrants' hands, as the children of Israel did.

What is matrimony or wedlock? The lawful uniting and resort of man and woman, according to the ordinance and commandment of God. Gen. ii.

What is adultery? The unlawful company of man and woman; of this is the marriage with near relatives, whereof Moses treateth. To this pertain incest, fornication, and like abominations.

What is properly man's work, or that man can do? Whatsoever reason and the nature of man can invent and do. As, to rule his house well, to govern the commonweal, build, and search the nature of things, and dispute and reason upon them.

What is that which is above man's power, otherwise called spiritual and heavenly? Whatsoever surmounts reason, and that man cannot attain unto, except God grant it and give power to obtain it. As, that our sins are forgiven through faith, and that we are saved by Jesus who died on the cross. That God is our defender and loving Father, yea, in adversity and trouble. That God is just, yea, when he suffereth good men to be persecuted and troubled. And on the other side letteth evil men enjoy and have all their pleasure and will here, and prevail against the good men.

What is flesh and blood? The circumlocution and true description of man. For man of himself is nothing but fleshly and carnal. Blessed art thou, Simon the son of Jonas, saith Christ, for flesh and blood hath not opened this unto thee, but my Father that is in heaven. John iii. Matt. xvi.

What is care and thought? A plain token of diffidence and distrust in God. It is an unfaithful care and pensiveness of the mind, for meat, drink, clothing and such other necessaries, which, in whomsoever you see it, surely it cannot be denied but that he is destitute of faith in God, and that his mind is set over much to worldly things. Therefore, I say unto you, Be not careful for the life, &c. After all such things do the heathen seek, saith Christ. This care and anxious thought is prohibited by God's word. For faith only looketh and leaneth to God's word and promises. Now to take thought and care lest God will not fulfil his word and promises, is to mistrust and not believe God, and so, as much as lieth in us, to make God a liar. Wherefore, as I said before, all thought and care of such matters, is utterly to be put away. The care and sorrow in things belonging to charity and love in every man's vocation, is commanded by God's word; as, to be sorry for another's mischance and misery. Matt. vi.

What is the gladness of the heart? A token of confidence in God, when, in adversity, trouble, or affliction, we neither wail, frown, nor fret within ourselves; but rejoice, look stoutly on it, and hold ourselves well paid, having this ever before our eyes, The son whom God loveth and receiveth he chastens. Worldly wealthiness and delight in pleasures of the flesh, which God threatens, are also a token of the contrary. Wo be unto you that laugh here, saith Christ, for ye shall weep and wail. Prov. iii. Heb. xii. Luke vi.

What is it to sin against the Father and the Son? It is to resist and persecute the word of God, but yet by ignorance, and of a good zeal, as Paul did before he was converted. 1 Tim. i.

What is the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is when any resist the open, manifest, and known truth; when any believe not the open and plain promises of God; and when any despair finally of the mercy of God.

What is meant by the word, zeal, in Scripture? Zeal is anger mixed with love; as, when the loving father is angry

with his child for doing amiss, he does it not because he hates his son, but in doing so he signifies his fatherly love towards him, willing by that he should do no more so, but endeavour to do better. For when the child is thus chidden or beaten, he takes heed that he do not so again, for fear of a more grievous punishment. It betokens also the anger that happens betwixt them that love heartily together. From hence comes jealousy, which springs out of vehement love. God is called in Scripture a jealous God, not that any should think that any such affections were in God; but that we might learn that God does all the things which are done, for nothing else but for their sake only, whom he loves so tenderly, even his elect. Not because he looks for any advantage or profit by it, but that they may be saved and enjoy the kingdom prepared for them.

What is the body of Christ? The congregation of all the faithful, and of all that believe, wheresoever they are, whose head is Christ himself. In Christ's body there is more flesh than bones, that is to say, there are more weak in the faith, than there are strong. Also, the body of Christ is the sacrament of thanksgiving after a certain manner. Eph. i. Col. ii.

What is it to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ? It is to believe that Christ suffered his passion for our sins. All the patriarchs and prophets believed in Christ; and Abraham, as Christ saith, saw his day and rejoiced in it. And they also did eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ spiritually. John viii. 1 Cor. x.

What is a virgin? In Scripture it signifies any honest faithful woman; or the spouse of Christ. Which spouse is either any soul believing in Christ, and living honestly according to his word; or else the whole congregation and church of the faithful.

What is a harlot? Besides the common signification, it is the unfaithful, whether it be man or woman, which seeketh health* elsewhere than of Christ; apostatizing and running away from God's word and faith in Christ, unto man's traditions. False doctrine and man's reason are oftentimes called by the prophets, harlots.

What is virtue? A firm readiness of the will to goodness, engendered by the word of God; and made easy by oft and great exercise in doing well. The moral virtues, and the outward fulfilling of the law are also engendered

* Salvation.

and gotten by often exercising them. Some define them thus, saying that virtue is the mean between two excesses, which excesses are called vices. Also the fruits of the Spirit in Scripture are called virtues. And here we must note, that all virtues consist in the deed and doing of them; as we read, The kingdom of God standeth not in words but in power, effect and doing of it. 1 Cor. iv.

What is vice? The fruit and work of our corrupt nature and the old man, and the readiness of the will to naughtiness. There dwelleth not in me, that is to say in my flesh, ought that is good. Wherefore whatsoever is in us that is good, cometh of God. Romans vii. James i.

What are sacraments and signs? Good assurances and confirmation of the word of God. Some define them thus; Sacraments are signs and witnesses of the will of God towards us, by which he moves and stirs our hearts to believe. Such were the skins wherewith God clothed Adam and Eve, the rainbow, circumcision, &c. Such are, with us, Baptism, and the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood.

What is baptism? The dipping into the water, in token of repentance, and newness of life to follow. It is also defined to be the badge and cognizance whereby not only we are known to be of the flock of Christ, but also we are established in our conscience that we are in the favour of God, our sins forgiven. It is called the clean and pure water, the laver of our regeneration, or fountain of the new birth.* Titus iii.

What is the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, or of thanksgiving? A holy mystery of the body and blood of Christ, instituted by Christ, to be eaten by all Christian

* Becon says elsewhere,—"The Spirit is not so bound to the water that he cannot work his office where the water is wanting, or that he of necessity must always be there, where the water is sprinkled. Simon Magus had the sacramental water, but he had not the Holy Ghost, being indeed a hypocrite and filthy dissembler. In the chronicle of the apostles' acts we read, that while Peter preached, the Holy Ghost came upon them that heard him, yea, and that before they were baptized; by reason whereof, Peter burst out into these words, and said, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? True Christians, whether they be old or young, are not saved because outwardly they are washed with the sacramental water, but because they are God's children by election through Christ, yea, and that before the foundations of the world were laid; and are sealed up by the Spirit of God unto everlasting life, the gifts and calling of God being such, that he cannot repent of them."

men, in token of remission of sins through Christ. That, as sure as we take the bread, and eat it with the mouth of the body, and drink the wine, so verily and certainly, even at the same instant, with the mouth of our faith, we receive the very body and blood of Christ, and there it as actually comforts and sustains the soul, as the bread and the wine nourish and comfort the heart, and the outward man. And as verily as the most sovereign plaster and salve laid to a wound or sore, draws out the filth and heals it; so verily and really does the body and blood of Christ, thus received, put away the sores and deformities of the soul, and not only makes it whole, but also pure, clean, without scar, wrinkle, and spot; and so makes it a delectable, lovely, and fair spouse in the sight of God. This is what it is to receive the body and blood of Christ in faith.

What is penitence or repentance? We read of two kinds of repentance. One was legal in the old law, used of the Jews and Israelites. This kind of repentance is a certain contrition of the mind, and hatred and detestation of our sins, with sorrow and compunction of the heart, which spring and rise as soon as we begin to feel and perceive the abomination of our sin, by laying our deeds, and the desires of our hearts to God's law. Such was the repentance and penitence of the Ninevites, and of Manasseh, and of others, who were greatly sorry and compunct in their hearts, by considering their offences on one part, and the anger and just wrath of God hanging over their heads for these offences. The tokens and outward signs of this repentance amongst the Jews, were commonly clothing in sackcloth, sprinkling and casting ashes upon their hair, and fasting a day, or two, or three. This kind of penitence wicked men may also have. For Judas that betrayed Christ, afterwards, when he perceived how wickedly he had done, took such care, sorrow, and pensiveness, that for pure anguish he hanged himself. So horrible and dreadful in his sight were hell-gates, the wages and payment of his iniquity. There is also an evangelical penitence, which is a continual study, purpose, and endeavour, and willing meditation of mortifying our flesh and fashioning our lives to the will of the Lord. And this kind of penitence is only in them that are renewed, and unto whom the forgiveness of sin through Christ is given. As for this word penance, because the pope's clergy have juggled with it so craftily,

and deceived the poor innocents' eyes,* it is well done, to reprove the evil use and handling of it, as the maintaining of the same is wicked. Jonah iii. Matt. xxvii.

What do the latter times signify in Scripture? The prophets signify by them commonly the days wherein the propheeies and the figures of the Old Testament respecting Christ took effect, and were performed. For when Christ came, both the prophecies and figures ceased. And ever since, Christ is openly, sincerely, dearly, and without all shadows, set out and preached, and so shall continue to the world's end. Paul calls the latter days, the time a little before the end of the world, and the day of the judgment of the Lord. In which we are even now. 1 Tim. iv. 1 Cor. x.

What is the consummation and end of the world? It is when the state and form of the world shall pass by; and when these changes of winter, summer, and spring, shall cease, when there shall be neither night nor day.

What is the day of the Lord? The great assembly, court, and parliament, of all men that have been from Adam to the last man. At which day our Lord Jesus Christ shall come, with great power and majesty, and pronounce the last sentence and doom, both to the good and to the evil; adjudging the evil to everlasting punishment with the devils, and granting the good and godly man everlasting joy and felicity. To the which that we may come, God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, grant; to whom be all honour and praise. Amen. Matt. xxv.

* Unlearned persons, those who trusted in the declarations of the church of Rome.

GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

EXTRACTS

FROM

ANOTHER BOOK OF DEMANDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

VERY PROFITABLE TO ALL STUDENTS OF DIVINITY.

Who is the Author and Maker of the most beautiful frame of this world? God, who by his almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, doth now also order, govern, and preserve the same. Gen. i. Jer. x. Aets xiv.

What is God? An endless, uncreated substance, without beginning or ending; who, by his word alone, first created all things, and now disposes and rules, yea, and conserves all things. One substance, distinguished, but not divided, into three sundry* Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and, notwithstanding, remaining one alone true and perfeet God. Matt. iii. xxviii. 1 John v.

What is his word, whereby he first created and now preserveth and governeth all things? It is the decreed sentence, appointment, will, power, and wisdom of God. The Son is also called the Word, because he is the wisdom and might of his Father. The word, in the Scripture, is oftentimes called, by a metaphor, or similitude, water, wine, milk, a lamp or candle, the voice of the shepherd, the right hand of the Lord, the breath of the Lord's mouth, the bread of life, a pearl or precious stone, and such like. Psal. xii. Isa. lv. 1 Pet. ii. Psal. cxix. John vi.

In what state did God create man? Perfect, righteous, and good, according to his own image and likeness; having fire and water set before him to take which he would, being endued with free will to do evil, or to continue still in goodness. Gen. ii.

What then condemned us? Sin by the law.

What is sin? Sin is the transgression or breaking of the whole law, or of any one commandment of God. And all that is done without faith is sin; and therefore the good works of infidels do nothing profit them. Rom. v. xiv.

What is the law? A learning, teaching us with authority what ought to be done or avoided, in thought, word, or

* Different, distinct.

deed, with rewards and punishments for doing or omitting of the same. This law is our schoolmaster to teach us the way to Christ, by whom the violence, sting, power, and the shadows of the law, are taken away, in whose place he hath brought in grace and truth. Gal. iii. Eph. ii. John i.

How chanced we to sin? By the choice of our free will, granted to us either to do good or evil; whereby we lost our felicity that we were first placed in, and our free will also.

How then were both we and our forefathers reconciled to the favour of God, which we lost by our disobedience, being unfruitful branches of the rotten root of Adam? By the performance of the merciful promise of God, given to Adam, that the Seed of the woman should break the serpent's head; renewed to Abraham, that in his Seed all nations should be blessed; and performed by Christ, who by his death paid our ransom. Which promise and performance, conveyed unto our forefathers and us, and to all the church by faith, has been and is, the common and general mean of salvation. They, that is to say our forefathers, believing that Christ was to come, by whom alone they should be saved; and we, with no doubtful faith, confessing that he is come, that he died, and rose again to regenerate us to God; to mortify us to sin, the flesh, and the world; to raise us up again at the last day; and so to take us unto himself; placing us in the glory of his Father. Rom. iv. Gen. iii. 1 Tim. ii. 1 Pet. ii.

Who receive this benefit? The church of Christ only.

What is the church of Christ? The whole number of the faithful believers in Christ's coming, sufferings, and resurrection; members of the mystical body of Christ; grains to make one loaf, grapes to make one wine, lively stones to build one spiritual house in Christ to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through the same Christ Jesus, who is the Head of the said body, the Corner stone of the said house, the Lord and Husband to the said church, his spouse, married to him by faith. 1 Pet. ii. Eph. i. v. Col. ii. Psal. cxviii. Hosea ii.

Who bestows this benefit upon us? God, through Jesus Christ his Son, by whom he hath made us his children also, and fellow heirs with Christ of his glory. John i. Gal. iii. Rom. viii.

What signifies this name Jesus? A saviour, which is the chief point of his office, and cause of his coming into this world, as appears by the words of the angel to Joseph.

She (meaning Mary) shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

What signifies this name Christ? Anointed; whereupon it may be gathered, that our Saviour Christ is a King, a Priest, and a Prophet, which three were accustomed by the ceremonial law to be anointed. A King, because he, being the Son of God, ought to be Lord and Ruler of all things by inheritance; and because he hath conquered and subdued unto himself, by death, by bearing our sins, by redeeming us his inheritance out of the power of the devil, all the whole kingdom, power, and authority over death, sin, and the devil. A Priest, because he, once for all, hath entered into the most holy and innermost tabernacle of God, and hath offered, once for all, a perpetual sufficient sacrifice to satisfy for all men's sins, and to purchase all men's redemption; not ceasing now still to be a perpetual Mediator and Intercessor to God his Father for man, he himself being both God and man; making an end of and abolishing all sacrifices and ceremonies, which were but shadows and significations, to put the Jews in remembrance of his coming, before he came. A Prophet; for the true and only sufficient doctrine which he preached when here upon earth, and left behind him written by his apostles for our learning, binding our conscience to be subject to none other doctrine but to his alone. Heb. ii. vii. ix. x.

By his kingdom he hath made us kings and heirs of his kingdom by adoption, and conquerors through his most valiant victory over our enemies, sin, death, hell, and the devil. By his priesthood, with the holy oil of his Spirit he hath made and anointed us priests, to offer to God the Father acceptable sacrifices through him; which are the sacrifices of righteousness, of praise, of thanksgiving, of a humble and contrite heart, of faith, and wholly to crucify and offer up ourselves unto him; and by the same office, we, being made partakers by him of the same, may be bold to come into the sight of God, to offer up our sacrifice and prayer. By the office of his prophecy or schoolmastership, he enlightens us with the true knowledge of his Father, instructs us in the truth, and makes us the disciples of God. By his anointment he receives these three offices, to communicate them to us, whereupon we are called Christians. 1 Pet. ii. Rev. i. 1 Cor. xv. Heb. xiii. Rom. xii.

What is a king? A rightful magistrate or head power under God, among men, ordained of God for the defence of the good and the keeping down of evil, according to right and justice. Rom. xii. 1 Peter ii.

What is a priest? An officer appointed and licensed of God to present himself to the sight of God, to obtain his favour by intercession, or to pacify his wrath by offering up of sacrifice acceptable to him. Heb. v.

What is a prophet? A messenger of God to declare the will of God, either in showing the threatenings, or opening the promises, or expounding and declaring the mysteries contained in his holy word or will, to us his children.

Why do you call us his children, seeing that Christ is his only Son? We are not by nature the children of God, as Christ only is, but by adoption, and grace or favour of God. As for Christ, he is of the same substance and essence with his Father.

By what means do we receive at the hand of God these heavenly treasures? Or by what means are they conveyed unto us? By faith.

What is faith? An assured confidence and trust in the truth of God, in the merits and promises of Christ, conceived through Christ, by hearing of his word, hoping still for the performance of the said promises; in the mean season not idle, but still working by charity; or as St. Paul defines it, in his epistle to the Hebrews, Faith is a sure confidence of things hoped for, and a certainty of things that are not seen. Rom. x. Heb. xi.

What is hope? A constant looking for of those things which we have conceived through faith by the word of God.

What is charity? A godly virtue; a lovely and gentle affection of the mind whereby we love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. Charity is also taken for the fruits of faith, and works of mercy. Matt. xxv.

Who is my neighbour? Any man upon whom I do execute the works of mercy, or that stands in need of my help. Luke x.

What is the grace of God? God's favour, benevolence, and kind mind, which of himself without our deserving, he beareth toward us, whereby he was moved to bestow upon us his Son Christ, and all other his good gifts, with free imputation of his goodness and undeserved remission of our sins. Eph. i.

Well; thou hast hitherto declared the great kindness of

God toward us; tell me now what is our duty toward him? To love him, fear him, honour him, follow him, serve him, believe in him; to fight under his standard with all faith, charity, truth, despising of worldly things; thanksgiving, innocency, fasting, prayer, obedience, humility, and patience; to put off the old man, and put on the new; to deny ourselves, to take the cross upon us, to forsake all that we have for his sake; and to set forth the glory of his name, that we may become a worthy temple of the Holy Ghost, and meet heirs for the kingdom of heaven, the true land of promise flowing with milk and honey.

What is it to love God? To cast our whole mind and affection upon God with all reverence, and earnestly desire to follow his will.

What is it to fear God? The fear of the Lord is a like reverence as children owe to their parents; a willing and faithful heed that we commit nothing against him or his word, that we offend not so loving a Father, but rather diligently apply ourselves to live according to his commandment, always thinking that God sees and beholds all our deeds, words, yea and thoughts. This fear is the beginning of wisdom. This fear maketh him blessed that hath it. This fear is the fountain of life. This fear keeps us from sin. And besides a number of other advantages this fear makes us more warily take heed of the craft of Satan. The fear of the Lord is also taken for the worshipping of the Lord, as it is written, They fear me in vain with the commandments of men. Jonah the prophet also said, I am a Hebrew, and fear the God of heaven. Prov. i. xiv. Eccl. viii. Isa. xxix. Jonah i.

If these many profits and advantages come of the fear of God, how is it that the devils do not enjoy the same, who fear the Lord as much as we? As much indeed, but not as well. For there are two kinds of fear; a child-like or reverent fear, whereof I have already spoken, and a servile bond, or slavish fear. The fear of the ungodly, by the consideration of the law and fear of punishment, as likewise the fear of the devils, is bond, servile, and thrall. Of this fear speaketh St. John in his epistle, on this manner; Fear is not in charity, but perfect charity casteth out fear. This fear is called a mighty fear in the psalm, because all things by it are done in unfaithfulness, in such ignorance and lack of knowledge of the mercy of God, as though God were

not a natural fatherly God, but a severe judge or cruel tyrant. James ii. 1 John iv. Psal. xc.

What is it to honour and worship God? Both with our whole mind and the strength thereof; and with the body and power thereof, as subject to the mind, and both subject to God, to reverence and praise God, to declare our love and fear toward him.

What is it to follow God? To believe in him; to keep his doctrine and obey it; to follow him whithersoever he leads or calls us; to bear what burden soever he lays upon us; to do as he has done before us, and given us an example to do after him.

What is it to serve God? To live according to his word, to believe in him, to refer all things to his glory, to help our neighbour, to obey him as our Lord and Master, whose service is no bondage but freedom, whose burden is light, whose yoke is pleasant; as Christ saith, Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. St. John also saith, His commandments are not grievous. Matt. xi. 1 John v.

What is it to believe in God? To receive his seed and doctrine into our heart; to commit ourselves unto him wholly in all things, and certainly to assure ourselves that all things are true, and shall undoubtedly be performed which he has promised.

What is it to fight under his standard? To follow the example of our Captain, Christ. As he by death hath conquered sin, death, hell, and the devil; so we by mortifying our flesh, ought to suppress, subdue, and conquer the same, with the help of our Saviour and Captain; whose standard, the cross, unless we follow, we perish and become a prey to our enemies, never to be redeemed, if he do not ransom us.

What is truth? Christ himself, the word of God, and whatsoever agrees with him, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. I am the way, the truth, and the life, saith Christ. And in his prayer to God the Father, he saith, Thy word is the truth. The civil truth* is an agreement of words and deeds, to say as the thing is, and as we know it to be. Of this truth the apostle speaks in his epistle to the Ephesians, saying, Put away lying and speak

* Truth generally, not religious truth.

every man truth unto his neighbour, forasmuch as we are members one of another. Also the prophet Zechariah, Speak every man the truth to his neighbour; let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his neighbour, and love no false oaths. John xiv. xvii. Eph. iv. Zech. viii.

What is prayer? To call upon the name of the Lord, assuredly trusting to obtain that we require, so that we ask of him, in his Son's name, and none other, that thing which he wills to be required, and none other; and that either for obtaining of good things, avoiding of evil, or releasing and forgiveness of evil and sins past. Whatsoever ye ask in my name, saith Christ, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified by the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. Again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. And St. John, in his epistle, saith, This is the trust that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. John xiv. xvi. 1 John v.

What is obedience? A lowly and hearty submission of ourselves to God, and afterwards to our parents, to the magistrates, to our superiors, and to all those to whom God hath committed the rule and governance of his flock and people in this world; or, in just causes, to all them to whom we are by any title inferior.

But what if our superiors will enforce us to obey them in unjust causes? In this behalf we owe them no obedience. God is the highest magistrate. If any inferior magistrate commands anything contrary to his godly commandment and blessed will, we must answer, with the apostles, We must obey God more than men. Examples hereof we have many and divers, both in the Old and in the New Testament. Acts v.

What is humility? A subjection of the proud haughty courage of our mind, showing ourselves inferior to all men, presuming in nothing, esteeming ourselves worse than all men in our own conceits. And this is that which the apostle saith, In giving honour go one before another. Again, Be not high minded, but make yourselves equal to them of the lower sort. Be not wise in your own own conceits. Hereto agrees the saying of St. Peter, Submit yourselves every man one to another. Knit yourselves together in lowliness of mind. For God resisteth the proud, and

giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you when the time is come. Rom. xii. 1 Peter v.

What is patience? Willingly, without resistance either in thought, word, or deed, to suffer undeserved punishment, after the example of Christ, who prayed for them that persecuted and most cruelly tormented him. This patience is described of St. Peter in his first epistle, where he saith, Servants, obey your masters with fear, not only if they be good and courteous, but also though they be froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God, endure grief, and suffer wrong undeserved. For what praise is it, if when ye be buffetted for your faults, ye take it patiently? But if when ye do well, ye suffer wrong and take it patiently, then is there thanks with God. For hereunto verily were ye called; for Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed the vengeance to Him that judgeth righteously. Luke xxiii. 1 Peter ii.

What is the old man that we must put off? The naughty, corrupt, and rotten nature, which since the fall of Adam we have lineally at our first generation received of our parents, through the corruption of the first root Adam; or thus—the naughty concupiscence, lust to sin, and affection of our flesh, without faith. Of this old man our Saviour Christ speaks on this manner, That which is born of flesh, is flesh. And, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Also the apostle, Lay from you the old man which is corrupt according to the deceivable lusts. Again, Put off the old man with his works. John iii. Eph. iv. Col. iii.

What is the new man that we must put on? The renewing of man by faith and the word of God; the Spirit of God given by Christ our spiritual and second Adam. Again, To tame the old man, our fleshly and first father Adam. To beget us again, and adopt us to God; which spirit we receive by Christ at our regeneration. Of this new man speaketh our Saviour Christ thus, That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Also St. Paul, Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God is shapen in righteousness and true holiness.

Again, Put on the new man, which is renewed in the knowledge and image of Him that made him. John iii. Eph. iv. Col. iii.

What is to deny ourselves? Plainly to profess that all our labours and works profit nothing unto salvation; to slay the old Adam, with all his lusts and affections.

What is it to forsake all that we have for Christ's sake? To esteem all that we have not to be ours, for his sake, and willingly, if need so require, for the profession of his name, to depart from wife, children, parents, friends, country, house, lands, and all things else that we do or may enjoy; yea, and to put ourselves in danger of all peril for the name of Christ, and profession of the gospel. He that loveth father or mother more than me, saith Christ, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. Again, If a man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Matt. x. Luke xiv.

What is the cross that we must take upon us? Any sorrow or pain that belongeth to any vocation or manner of life, for the trial and proof of our faith and patience. Also it is the correction, chastening, rod, and staff, of the Lord; wherewith he punishes those whom he loveth, not to their damnation or utter casting away from his favour, but to salvation; and to teach us to flee unto him in our trouble and adversity, as children to our most dear and loving Father.

What is the temple of the Holy Ghost? An honest, godly, and faithful Christian heart, in which God is rightly worshipped in spirit and truth; wherein are offered spiritual sacrifices of praise, innocency, thanksgiving, of a humble and contrite heart, whose chief corner-stone is Christ. Know ye not, saith St. Paul, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. St. Peter also saith, Ye, as living stones are made a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, for to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. John iv. 1 Cor. iii. 1 Peter ii.

What is the kingdom of heaven? The kingdom of heaven is diversely taken in the Scriptures.

First, for the holy gospel and word of God, because that is the sceptre and iron rod whereby God ruleth, reigneth, and dwelleth in the hearts of the faithful. Of this kingdom Christ speaks in the gospel on this wise, I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; that is to say, I will commit unto thee the office to preach the gospel of salvation, which openeth and unlocketh unto men the way and door by the which they may be saved, and enter into the kingdom of heaven. Also, the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of meal till it was all leavened. Matt. xiii. xvi.

Secondly; the kingdom of heaven is taken for faith itself; as St. Paul saith, The kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans xiv.

Thirdly; the kingdom of heaven is expounded to be the whole congregation of the faithful abiding in this life, in whom the Lord, by his word and Spirit, doth invisibly dwell and reign. Of this kingdom speaketh Christ in the gospel, in this manner, The kingdom of heaven is like to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five were foolish. Matthew xxv.

Fourthly; the kingdom of heaven is taken for the joy, felicity, and pleasure, which the souls of the believers enjoy, when they are departed out of this world; and their bodies also joined with their souls at the day of judgment, shall enjoy, even in that place which Christ hath prepared for them to possess; where they shall be comforted with the sight of his Majesty and Godhead, and with the fruition of his perpetual felicity with him. Of this kingdom Christ speaks in the gospel, When ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you to be driven out of the doors. Luke xiii.

Fifthly; the kingdom of heaven is wheresoever God's word is preached; from which kingdom they only are excluded, who believe not the word, according to the saying of Christ, He that is of God, heareth the words of God; but ye hear not, because ye are not of God. Again, My sheep hear my voice. Also, Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. John viii. x. xviii.

What meanest thou by a land that floweth with milk

and honey? Pleasant abundance of all things, both sweet and profitable. By the honey is understood sweetness, joy, gladness, and pleasure; by the milk, pure nourishment, whereby we still continue, grow, and increase in faith and godliness unto the measure of Christ.

When shall we enter upon and enjoy this kingdom, this promised land that floweth with milk and honey? The church militant in this world, governed by the spirit of its most mighty, valiant, victorious, and triumphant Captain, Christ, already enjoys after a certain manner, in spirit, through faith, this kingdom and blessed land; as it is written, He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him. But when they are joined together both body and soul with the rest of the faithful congregation, which are departed out of this world in the faith of Christ, to make one whole triumphant congregation; when they have by the power of Christ conquered the malignant church of the devil, which shall be at the last day of judgment, which we do daily look for now in these latter times; then shall they truly and perfectly enjoy and possess all the joys and pleasures of that most joyful and pleasant land, whereof David speaks in this manner, I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living. Now we see in a glass, saith the apostle, even in a dark speaking; but then shall we see face to face. And as St. John saith, It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. The eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. And all these things shall the elect congregation of God enjoy and possess, immediately after these latter times wherein we now live. John iii. Psalm xxvii. 1 Cor. xiii. 1 John iii. 1 Cor. ii.

THE DIVERSITY

BETWEEN

GOD'S WORD AND MAN'S INVENTION,

WHEREIN THOU SHALT SEE LIVELY DESCRIBED AND PLAINLY SET FORTH, WHAT COMFORTABLE AND HEAVENLY BENEFITS THE WORD OF GOD BRINGETH UNTO US; AND CONTRARIWISE, WHAT HORRIBLE PLAGUES AND MOST GRIEVOUS PESTILENCES, MEN'S TRADITIONS BRING UNTO SUCH AS RECEIVE AND BELIEVE THEM; NEWLY SET FORTH

BY THOMAS BECON.

A. D. 1563.

What have chaff and wheat to do together, saith the Lord? Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the hard stone?—Jeremiah xxii.

Ye shall put nothing to the word which I command you, neither do ought therefrom, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.—Deut. iv.

Whatsoever I command you, that take heed ye do only unto the Lord; put thou nought thereto, nor take ought therefrom.—Deut. xii.

Take heed and do all that is written in the book of the law of the Lord, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left, but stick fast unto the Lord your God.—Joshua xxiii.

All the words of God are pure and clean, for he is a shield unto all them that put their trust in him. Put thou nothing unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.—Prov. xxx.

I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book; if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall minish of the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, &c.—Rev. xxii.

With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of the Saviour: and then shall ye say, Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, declare his counsels among the people, keep them in remembrance, for his name is excellent.—Isaiah xii.

Be astonished, O ye heavens, be afraid and abashed at such a thing, saith the Lord. For my people have done two evils; they have forsaken me, the well of the water of life, and have digged them pits, yea, vile and broken pits, that can hold no water.—Jeremiah ii.

To his loving friend, Master Paul Johnson, Thomas Becon wisheth health in Christ.

Christ and all his apostles, many years since, prophesied that in the latter age of this old, crooked, broken-backed and sinful world, there should arise false Christs and false prophets. That is to say, false anointed and false preachers, which earnestly with all diligence, through the wisdom of the flesh, should teach new Christs and new Saviours; work great signs and wonderful miracles; so greatly that if it were possible, the very elect and chosen people of God should be brought into error; like grievous wolves not spare the flock; speak perverse things; lead away the disciples after them; bring in privily, pernicious and damnable sects, denying the Lord that bought them; blaspheme the way of truth, and in all points resist the verity of God's word as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses. And verily, though this ungodliness and wicked abomination began in Christ's time, and in the days of the apostles, yea, and long before, (for in what age hath falsehood ceased to resist the verity and to obscure it,) as we may evidently perceive in the books of Holy Scripture; yet when the bishop of Rome began to leave the office of a shepherd, and became a wolf, rather ready to devour than to feed; to kill and slay, than to help and relieve; to be a lord rather than a minister, and a persecutor than a preacher, it was most chiefly exercised and put in practice. For although before the time of Christ and of his apostles, and in their days also, the verity was resisted of the adversaries thereof, yet were there at that time true prophets, faithful apostles, and godly preachers, who always defended the truth, and preserved it without harm from the ravening teeth of those most cruel wolves. But when the fierce tyranny of that Romish bishop began to spring, to flourish, and to have the overhand, and had driven Christ out of his temple, that is, out of the hearts of the faithful who only are the temple of God; as St. Paul saith, The temple of God is holy, which ye are; and the pope became Christ's vicar, reigning in his stead, banishing God's holy word, and bringing in his own devilish laws, decrees, and traditions; then began the mouths of the preachers to be stopped, then was the light of the gospel obscured, then was all

true godliness exiled. And although divers good men perecived the great abomination that the pope used, and greatly lamented the decay of the Christian faith, and the loss of many souls, yet few or none durst rebuke his corrupt manners, so great was his tyranny in all places; so that in process of time the greatest part of them that professed Christ by name, were utterly fallen from Christ and Christ's religion, and were Christians in name, but papists in deed. What marvel? If the pope had played the open antichrist, and showed himself to be an extreme adversary to God and to his word, then should his kingdom never have continued so long. Then had he and all his popery been contemned, rejected, set at nought, and cast away, many years before our days. But forasmuch as he transfigured himself into an angel of light, and took on him the person of a true apostle, and yet was indeed a false apostle and deceitful worker, pretending always great favour and love to Christ and his word; he, under this cloak deceived almost all the world, and ruled after his own carnal lusts and beastly pleasures, no man once attempting to resist him. What cannot hypocrisy and feigned holiness bring to pass? What mastery is it to lead men in darkness where there is no light? What great pain was it for the bishop of Rome to lead men captive, and to make them miserable slaves, and to stumble them in darkness, clouds, and false imaginations when the lantern of the true light, which is the sincere word of God, was closed up and wrapped about with such manifold mists and clouds, I mean the false and pestilent glosses of the crooked papists? What does the light of a candle profit a man being in a dark house, if it be hid and set under a bushel? What advantage comes to an infant though he have a nut, if he cannot come to the kernel for the hard shell? Thus when Christ in his word was brought to sleep, the pope calling himself God's vicar on earth, and Peter's successor, and challenging unto himself so much power and authority, as Christ had ever given to him of his eternal Father, both in heaven and earth—then he, the pope, reigned only as God in men's consciences, by his traditions, decrees, and ordinances. He took upon him to bless, to curse, to make, to mar, to save, to condemn, to wound, to heal, to bind, to loose, to build, to destroy, to lift up, to pluck down, to enact, to dispense, to make white, to make black, to cast down into hell, to lift up into heaven; to conclude, he took

upon him to do all things that any man can devise to be done, so great and mighty was he and his authority.

Proteus never turned himself into so many fashions as that antichrist of Rome did. He would now for a little displeasure be as fierce as a ramping lion, and straightway (so that money be the advocate and pleader) he would be more meek and gentle than a lamb. To transgress one of his traditions was a greater offence than to break all the commandments of God. To deny or withhold one penny of St. Peter's patrimony, was a greater sin than to deny tribute to the temporal powers. To strike one of his anointed shavelings,* was taken for a more grievous offence than to resist the king, or to fight against any worldly prince. So little were the high powers esteemed, regarded, and set by, to whom, notwithstanding, all men without exception ought to be obedient. For a priest to take a wife honestly and lawfully in the fear of the Lord, according to the word of God, if the gift of chastity were not given him, was reputed a more abominable offence than to have a concubine or a harlot.† To eat flesh on one of those days that the pope had prohibited, was a greater sin than to abuse the blessed name of God by swearing, forswearing, or by any other kind of blasphemy; than to envy our Christian brethren, to strike father or mother, or to do any other thing that God hath forbidden in his Holy Scripture. His drowsy dreams must needs be observed, though Scripture and reason prove them naught. Poor Christ's commandments must give place to the decrees of so holy and glorious a father, who attempteth nothing in earth, but God confirmeth the same in heaven! The pope with his sophistical and false persuasions, deceived almost all the world, and brought them into such great blindness, that they esteemed his traditions above the precepts of God; not considering what Christ saith, Ye have destroyed the commandment of God for the establishment of your traditions. Again, They worship me in vain, teaching the doctrines and commandments of men. This has been the cause that darkness, ignorance, and blindness have continued so long in the world. This has been the cause that we have been so greatly deceived these many years. This has been the cause that the wholesome doctrine of God has been neglected, despised,

* The Romish priests.

† See the note to 1 Cor. vii. 9. in the Rhemish Testament, ed. 1582, p. 440, where this is openly and plainly asserted.

and nothing set by. Yea, this has been and at present is, the cause of all the hurly burly, of all the contentions and strifes, that are among both the learned and unlearned, while one defends this, another that. Oh lamentable case! For as Christ cannot agree with Belial, nor light with darkness, nor truth with falsehood; so cannot Christ's preachers agree with the popish praters, nor the word of God with the pope's traditions. Therefore when the true preachers, moved with the Spirit of God, declare and set forth Christ and his blessed gospel, then come the papistical prattlers, and with open mouth inveigh against that holy teaching, both by preaching and writing; affirming it to be plain heresy, new doctrine, and that it will be the cause of much dissension, if it take place and be received; when notwithstanding, who knows not, that where the word of God is truly preached and faithfully received of the hearers, there is true faith toward God, fervent love toward our neighbour, hearty obedience toward the temporal rulers, brotherly care for the poor, innocency of life, and both the study and practice of all goodness and godliness. But contrariwise, where the word of God is not taught, there is neither true faith toward God, nor fervent love toward our neighbour, nor hearty obedience toward the temporal rulers, nor brotherly care for the poor, nor innocency of life, nor yet either the study or the practice of any point of goodness; but all that is ungodly, wicked, and devilish. And whence cometh this, but only of ignorance, which is the mother and nurse of hypocrisy, superstition, idolatry, impure life, &c.; as Solomon saith, When the preaching of God's word creepeth, the people perish.

The treasures of God's word have been hidden in the ground a great space, and men's traditions have flourished in the stead of them. Therefore, now when it comes again to light, many account it new learning, some judge it heresy, another sort disdain to hear it or to read it. By this means is God's holy word evil reported, and has few friends, yea it is extremely hated, and persecuted not of a few. No marvel. For they know not what a noble jewel and precious treasure the word of God is. They feel not the sweetness of it. They savour not the great and exceeding profit that ensues of the knowledge of it. They think the doctrine of the gospel no better, nor yet of greater excellency than the writings of the heathen philosophers. And seeing they have no more delight and pleasure in it, they continue

still in their old baggage, and bald inventions of men, willing rather so to remain in their ignorant blindness and blind ignorance, than once to come unto the knowledge of Christ's gospel, and to walk in the pleasant light thereof. But to the intent they may be moved, excited, and provoked unto the love of God's word, and unto the detestation of man's trifling traditions, I have thought it not unfitting, nor out of the way, to describe and set forth, as it were in a short table, the diversity of God's word and man's invention; that such as read it may be more inflamed to embrace the Holy Scriptures, and from henceforth cease to have in admiration, the unprofitable, yea, the noisome inventions and traditions of man.

This little treatise, after I had finished, I thought it good to dedicate it to your name, and to send it unto you as a testimony of my good will towards you, who from the first time of our acquaintance, have not ceased to show yourself a right dear friend to me in all things, yea, and as another self. In this treatise you shall see what high and inestimable commodities come of the most precious word of God. Again, what incommodities, yea, what plagues and pestilences, arise from the doctrine of men's trifling traditions and idle inventions; which, as they are hurtful to the souls and bodies of men, so are they highly detested and abhorred of God, namely, when for their sake his blessed word is neglected and set aside, as these his words pronounced by the prophet declare manifestly: Be astonished, O ye heavens; be afraid and abashed at such a thing, saith the Lord. For my people have done two evils; they have forsaken me, the well of the water of life, and have digged them pits, yea, vile and broken pits, that can hold no water. But the time is at hand, (roar devil, rage world,) that all the wicked inventions of men shall return thither from whence they came; that is to say, unto the devil, according to this prophecy of our Saviour Christ, Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up by the roots. Christ, who is the true light of the world, vouchsafe to illumine us all, through his Holy Spirit, with the light of his most holy gospel, that we may with one mind embrace his holy word, and bring forth the fruits of the same, unto the glory of his holy name. Amen. God keep you and all yours in his faith, fear, and love unto the end. Amen.

THE

DIVERSITY BETWEEN GOD'S WORD AND MAN'S INVENTION.

I. God's word is lively and giveth life. It is signified by the wheels which had the spirit of life in them. (Ezek. i.) Hence comes it that David oftentimes prays to God on this manner, Make me alive after thy word; quicken me according to thy testimony. And our Saviour Christ saith, If any man keep my word, he shall never taste death.—So long as we believe this word, and continue in the same, we live; but when we believe it not, nor remain in it, we can none otherwise but perish, die, and be damned. For this cause it is called the word of life. Do all things without murmuring and disputing, that ye may be such as no man can complain of, and unfeigned sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom see that ye shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, saith St. Paul. And the apostles said to Christ, Thou hast the words of everlasting life.

Man's invention is dead and bringeth death. For it comes of the affection and wisdom of the flesh, which is death. By this means did our father Adam, with all his posterity, fall into death, because he, following his own invention and mind, did eat of the forbidden fruit, contrary to the word of the Lord. And therefore it was said to the angel, that is to the preacher, at Sardis, Thou hast the name that thou livest, and thou art dead. For he despised the word of God, and cleaved to his own inventions. Therefore it is said that he had not full works, that is to say, works that were acceptable before God. He who was governed only with the word of death, could not be alive, and acceptable to God.

II. *God's word* works marvellously unto the health of them that believe. And therefore, in the word of God it is called, the word of health or salvation; as it is written, Ye men and brethren, the children of the generation of Abraham, the word of this health was sent unto you. Again, The word of God is lively and mighty in operation. The knowledge of it is the knowledge of salvation. And St. Paul saith, that it is the power of God unto salvation for so many as believe.

Man's invention works strongly unto the destruction of the unfaithful. So many as believe therein, it is not possible, but they must perish. For what is it but the way of perdition? As it is written, We are wearied in the way of wickedness and perdition.

III. *God's word* is the sword of the Spirit; as the apostle saith, The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, and enters through, even unto the dividing of the soul and of the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow; and is the judge of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; neither is there any creature invisible in his sight. Again, Put upon you the helmet of health, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With this sword it was prophesied that seven shepherds and eight rulers, that is to say, all the preachers of the gospel, should feed the land of Assyria, that is, the Gentiles. And with that same sword it was also prophesied, that the Ethiopians should be slain. This sword did John see coming out of the mouth of the Son of man. And the word of God is called a sword, because it divides, that is to say, it judges between all things, yea, and that very truly. For there is no judgment certain, but that only which cometh from the word of God. By that, no man, or flesh, but the Spirit of God, judgeth. Furthermore, every man without the Spirit of God is a liar. Therefore, he calls that which is evil, good; and that which is good, evil; bitter, sweet; and sweet, bitter; so that he is cursed of the Lord.

Man's invention is the sword of the flesh, more cruel, more terrible, and more pernicious, than all the weapons of iron. For those can do no more than wound and slay the bodies; but the other, forasmuch as it makes them that love it the enemies of God, slays the soul, yea, and that with the most miserable kind of death. From the plagues and tyranny whereof, except we be delivered through the gift of God, without doubt, everlasting death shall follow. Verily, all the swords, yea, and all manner of torments, be they ever so horrible and grievous, ought we rather to suffer, than we should once be obedient to the cursed traditions of men, which pluck us away from the word of God. For they worship God without fruit, and in vain; yea, they worship him not at all, that teach the doctrines and commandments of men. For that which is mere hypocrisy is nothing less than the worshipping of God. Whereof it follows, that they who serve and honour God after the com-

mandment and teaching of man's brain, do nothing else than labour in vain, and seek their own damnation.

IV. *God's word* piereeth the heart and saveth. For it slayeth sin and the most pernicious sting of death, and does nothing less than cause death.

Man's invention, through the working of Satan, pierees also the heart, but makes it carnal, wicked, foolish, the enemy of God and his truth, and the child of everlasting damnation.

V. *God's word* judges righteously, truly, and faithfully of all things. For it never deceives any man, nor yet can. For it was revealed and showed of God, who has always loved the truth, and destroys all them that work iniquity and speak lies.

Man's invention can have no true, no certain, no right judgment of any thing. For it is nothing but deceit and the lie itself. For it comes from the father of lies, and calls good evil, and evil good, and names that which is righteous unrighteous, and the contrary; and that which is profane holy, and the contrary also. To be short, the judgment of it in all points is wicked and naught.

VI. *God's word* calls all them that love and use it sincerely, from error and falsehood.

Man's invention can never call any man from error and falsehood, seeing itself is both error and falsehood.

VII. *God's word* lightens all them that receive it; as the psalmist testifies, saying, The commandment of the Lord is light, enlightening the eyes. Again, Thy word, O Lord, is a lantern to my feet, and a light to my pathways. Oh most pleasant and comfortable light!

Man's invention blinds even them also that were lightened before by the word of God, through his mercy, if they cast the word away, and embrace the other. For all the traditions of men desire nothing but to cast the lovers thereof into dreadful shadows and execrable darkness. Oh most unpleasant and uncomfortable mists!

VIII. *God's word* always lightens them more clearly that were lightened before; as it is written, The pathway of the righteous is as a shining light; it comes forth and increases unto a perfect day.

Man's invention augments and increases, always perniciously, the blindness of them that were blind before, and leads them from darkness to darkness.

IX. *God's word* confirms and strengthens the heart of him that believes it. It makes him bold, steadfast, and

constant against all temptation, that he be not overcome of it; against all sin, that he despair not, but be certain of the remission and forgiveness of his sins; against death, that he may suffer gladly, both it, and any other trouble, for the truth's sake; and against hell, that he may be sure that he shall not be swallowed up of it.

Man's invention makes the heart fearful and wavering, and makes a man uncertain in all things; so unlikely is it that it can establish and make strong any man against sin, death, and hell.

X. *God's word* is, in all points, constant, sure, invariable, and cannot be changed; yea, it abides for ever and ever; as it is written, The truth of the Lord abideth for ever. Again, O Lord, thy word endureth in heaven for ever and ever. Also, The beginning of thy word is truth; all the judgments of thy righteousnesses are for evermore. Also, the prophet Isaiah saith, The word of the Lord abideth for ever and ever.

Man's invention is inconstant, uncertain, variable, and mutable, and cannot abide steadfast. It must needs fail, and come to naught, at the time before appointed by God; so that the truth at the last shall have the upper hand, which truth overcomes all things.

XI. *God's word* turneth souls unto the Lord, and turneth them away from all deceivable and transitory things. The law of the Lord, saith David, is pure, turning (or converting) souls.

Man's invention turns away souls from God, and allures them unto vain things, and such as soon flit and pass away.

XII. *God's word* is fiery, through the Holy Ghost, and kindles them greatly that love it; as David saith, Thy word is marvellous fiery. And Solomon writeth, Every word of the Lord is fiery. Also Moses saith, (Deut. xxxiii.) In his right hand is the fiery law. This law and this word, is the fiery gold whereof Christ counsels the angel of Laodicea to buy, that he may be made rich.

Man's invention is marvellously cold, because it is without the Spirit of God. Therefore, it makes all them that love it, cold, sluggish, and idle.

XIII. *God's word maketh truly rich.* For there is none richer than he who is rich in God. He is rich in God in whom God dwells, as in his temple, by his Holy Spirit, which writes in his heart the law of life.

Man's invention tyrannously and cruelly impoverishes

men, and deprives them of the true and necessary riches of the soul, that is to say, the word of God, his favour, the true faith, and the works of the righteosness of faith.

XIV. *God's word* is a shield to them that believe and trust in the Lord; as Solomon saith, Every word of God is a shield to them that trust in it. And David saith, His truth shall defend them with a buckler.

Man's invention helps and profits nothing; yea, it is rather pestilent, noisome, and pernicious. Therefore it is called the chair of pestilence.

XV. *God's word* makes a man to use worldly riches, and all other things, after a godly manner, and in the Lord.

Man's invention makes a man neither to use riches well, nor any other thing.

XVI. *God's word* is pure and clean. Therefore, faith in it purifies; as it is written, Purifying their hearts by faith.

Man's invention is, in all points, impure and unclean. Therefore, it makes so many as lean on it wicked and impure.

XVII. *God's word* maketh men joyful in the Lord. For it is the property of it to exclude all feigned mirth, and to bring the true joy of the mind, so that the faith be sincere and steadfast in it.

Man's invention never makes men joyful, but heavy and sad in heart. For it brings only that gladness which is wicked and fleshly, and contrary to the will of God.

XVIII. *God's word* excites and stays up the mind from the abominations of the world unto a holy mourning and dolour in the Lord. But, forasmuch as the heaviness cometh from the Spirit of God, it is tempered and measured always with an inward and a very true joy.

Man's invention provokes and drives, yea, and compels men, whether they will or will not, unto evil mournings and wicked sorrows, yea, and that many times, even unto desperation, without any intermixture, or feeling of true and perfect joy; which thing they can right well testify that have therewith been accustomed.

XIX. *God's word* worketh in man a loving and sweet trust in the Lord alone; whose goodness, beneficence, liberality and carefulness for us, it always inculcates and beats into our hearts, whereby all trust of works, and of human wisdom, or of the flesh, is made void, and the careful anxiety that belongeth to diffidence or mistrust put away; according to this commandment of the Lord, Take no thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewith ye shall be clad. For your heavenly Father

knoweth that ye have need of all these things. First of all seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be cast unto you.

Man's invention excludes and utterly puts away the necessary trust that we ought to have in the Lord, and in his fatherly providence, and brings only the confidence of the flesh. For it causes a man to trust unto human provision and carefulness, and unto his own labours and works, contrary to this commandment of God, "Be careful for nothing. The Lord is at hand." (Phil. iv.) But cursed is that man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and sufferеth his heart to go from the Lord. (Jer. xvii.)

XX. *God's word* makes a man to dwell in it. For it teaches him that the Lord has a fatherly care, both for him and for all his; and that of him, by him, and in him, all things are, and that he defends his servants; as it is written, Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say unto the Lord, Thou art my hope and my stronghold, my God, in him will I trust. For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall defend thee under his wings, and thou shalt be safe under his feathers; his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon day. A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee, &c. There shall no evil happen unto thee, neither shall any come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee in their hands, that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone. Again, Except the Lord keep the city, he that keepeth it watcheth in vain. When the faithful knoweth these things, he trusteth unto the goodness and providence of God alone, which maketh him at all times to lead a quiet life, and without all fear, and boldly to say with David, The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid? Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid, and though there arose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.

Man's invention discourages and makes the heart ever-

more fearful to all things. For how is it possible but that he must needs fear, who feels not the great mercy or goodness of God? For by no tradition of men can either God, or his works, be so known, that any profit can ensue thereof. Therefore, when he is not known, the mind is always afraid, and full of care and thought. For when he knows not God, he trusts only to those creatures which he knows must needs soon decay and fall away. All the strength of the flesh is shortly broken, as a reed; and they that cleave unto it are always doubtful, and at the last are shaken down and destroyed.

XXI. *God's word* is a high solace, and an exceeding great comfort in all tribulation, as we may evidently see by innumerable places of the Scripture, which every faithful man who knows God's word, feels, and proves to be true in himself. Except my study had been in thy law, saith David, I had perished in my trouble.

Man's invention is profitable for nothing less, than truly to comfort them that are destitute of help, and comfortless.

XXII. *God's word* is the word of faith, which alone must be believed; and they only that believe it, are faithful and acceptable in God's sight.

Man's invention neither makes any man faithful, nor yet acceptable in the sight of God.

XXIII. *God's word* is the truth. For so is it many times called in the Holy Scriptures, because in it there is nothing found but truth only, forasmuch as it came from the everlasting Truth, and therefore it makes them that love it true, and the sons of truth. Of his own free will, saith St. James, hath he begotten us with the word of truth.

Man's invention is a lie, yea, and that a very manifest lie; and is received and believed of none but of such as have no judgment, but are altogether without the Spirit of God.

XXIV. *God's word* is faithful and right. Therefore they that believe it are faithful, and their works are right.

Man's invention, as it is altogether unfaithful and wicked, so it makes as many as receive it both unfaithful and wicked.

XXV. *God's word* is the fountain of wisdom, neither is there any truly wise who drinks not of the waters of this fountain. The well of wisdom, saith the wise man, is the word of the most high God. David also saith, The testimony of the Lord giveth wisdom to the ignorant.

Man's invention is the well of foolishness, and it makes

as many as receive it, like horses and mules, that have no understanding.

XXVI. *God's word* heals all diseases of the soul; as it is written, He sent his word, and healed them. Again, Neither herb, nor emplasture, healed them, but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things.

Man's invention increases the diseases of the soul, and never ceases till it has brought the lover thereof unto death and damnation.

XXVII. *God's word* is the law of the Spirit, written in the hearts of the faithful.

Man's invention is the law of the flesh, written in the breasts of the unfaithful and misbelieving.

XXVIII. *God's word* is the word of grace and favour, making them that believe it acceptable to God, through Christ. Moreover it is only written in the hearts of them whom the Lord loveth. They marvelled, saith Luke, at the words of grace and favour that came out of his mouth. Therefore Christ is called, Full of grace and truth; that thou mayest know that he for this purpose had the fulness of the truth, that is, the word, because he was full of grace, that is to say, highly in God's favour. And then shall we receive of his fulness, when we have gotten the grace of God through him, and then shall his verities be straightway written in our hearts. And these verities are the words of God.

Man's invention is the word of hatred and indignation. For God hates it extremely, and so many as receive it; as it is written, God hateth both the wicked and his wickedness. But this is found only in the unfaithful.

XXIX. *God's word* brings forth in the faithful, as in good trees, good fruits. For it is never without fruit in some man, wheresoever it be purely preached; as God saith by the prophet, As the rain and snow come down from heaven, and return not thither again, but water the earth, and make it moist, and cause it to bring forth fruit, even seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that shall come forth out of my mouth. It shall not return to me void, but shall do whatsoever my mind is, and shall prosper in them to whom I sent it.

Man's invention can bring forth nothing but the fruits of everlasting damnation. For it is flesh whose fruits are sour, pestilent, and full of poison. The works of the flesh, saith the apostle, are manifest, which are these—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, worshipping of

images, witchcraft, hatred, variance, zeal, wrath, strife, sedition, sects, envying, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like; which works they that commit, shall not be inheritors of the kingdom of God.

XXX. *God's word*, and the knowledge thereof, is the science or knowledge of saints, and of God. Wo, therefore, and everlasting damnation, hangs over their heads, who will not that the world should be replenished with this most wholesome science or knowledge, that is, with the most pure word of God.

Man's invention, and the knowledge thereof, is the science and knowledge of the flesh, and of Satan's synagogue; being indeed mere ignorance, and stark blindness. Hereof came it to pass that the Lord so often called the pharisees blind. For they were ruled by man's invention, which thing also we now see in the pharisees of our time.

XXXI. *God's word* is the testimony and witness-bearing of God's Spirit, and of his holy will.

Man's invention is the testimony and witness-bearing of the flesh, and of the devil.

XXXII. *God's word* marvellously refreshes the faithful. For it is the Lord's pasture. The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. The refection of this pasture is so strong, that it refreshes not only the soul, but also the body, yea, and that so effectually, that for a season it has no need of corporeal nourishment. Man, saith our Saviour Christ, shall not live with bread alone, but with every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Man's invention is the meat of the unfaithful, bringing unto them not life, but death; not salvation, but damnation.

XXXIII. *God's word* is a cup, that giveth men to drink wholesomely and unto salvation.

Man's invention is a cup full of venomous drugs, making drunk damnably, and turning a man from his right understanding, so that he cannot perceive those things that belong unto the Spirit of God. This is that cup wherewith the harlot of Babylon, that filthy strumpet, and mother of all abominations of the earth, hath made drunken all the inhabitants of the earth. Rev. xviii.

XXXIV. *God's word* is a most righteous and holy rule, yea, it is the alone and only rule of the children of the kingdom of God, that is of the holy congregation, to be gov-

erned by; neither do they admit any other rule, but that only and alone, without any intermixture of men's tradition. For there is but one God, one Christ, one faith, one word; therefore there is but one rule. Therefore all the sects of monasteries, fraternities, brotherhoods, colleges, and all other such like whatsoever, are superfluous and damnable, forasmuch as they have divided Christ, and taken on them another profession, which has no ground in the word of God, which alone is the rule of the faithful.

Man's invention is the execrable rule of the children of Satan's kingdom, that is, of the church malignant, which is parted and divided into innumerable sects, of which every one of them have feigned out of their own madness, for themselves, a special and peculiar way of salvation, which, notwithstanding, is the way to everlasting damnation.

XXXV. *God's word* makes them blessed who gladly hear, read, or search it; as David saith, Blessed is that man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor yet hath sat in the chair of pestilence. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law will he exercise himself day and night. Again, Blessed are they that search his testimonies.

Man's invention is embraced by carnal men, because they are not of God. And therefore are they cursed. Cursed be he that continueth not in all things that are written in this book, saith Moses. And the psalmist, in like manner, saith, Cursed be they that go away from his commandments.

XXXVI. *God's word* necessarily ought to be loved and kept of all men. Notwithstanding it is only loved heartily and kept diligently by the sons of the Most High. And they for the glory thereof, if needs be, will put themselves in danger of all perils, yea, if it were very death. For they know, and are fully persuaded, that God and his truth excel all things, yea, their own life. And they are certain by the word of God, which they believe, that they should receive better things in the world to come; as it is written, Rejoice and be merry, for great is your reward in heaven.

Man's invention, even of necessity, ought to be cast away of all men, and to be kept of none. Yet is it both loved and kept, by the children of the devil, that is, the unfaithful, but yet not so that they will put themselves in any great peril or danger, either of goods or of death, as we may perceive by the papists, who will not lightly die for the pope's decrees, which they, notwithstanding, pretend greatly

to love and favour; nor yet gladly lose any of their substance.

XXXVII. *God's word* is a sufficient doctrine to the uttermost, for the instruction and salvation of the faithful Christians, and therefore ought nothing either to be added unto it, or to be plucked from it; as Moses saith, Ye shall not add to the word that I speak unto you, nor take anything away from it. Again, That which I command thee, do that only to the Lord; neither put thou any thing to it, neither pluck thou any thing therefrom. And Solomon saith, Put nothing to the Lord's words, lest thou be rebuked, and found a liar.

Man's invention is altogether insufficient. Therefore the foolish men put unto it, take away, correct, alter, change and change again, command and command again, that at the last they may bring that to pass, which shall never come unto any perfection or good effect. This appears evidently in the monks, who are always making of statutes, and yet straightway revoke them, and out of hand they establish them again, so that there is no end in their doings. This also appears well in the pope, and in all the synagogues of his satanical kingdom, which (so that some new lucre may grow unto them) will enact, make void, and establish again, one thing more than a hundred times.

XXXVIII. *God's word* is of so great glory and majesty, that no man is able to express it.

Man's invention is so vile, and of such great wickedness, that no man is able to declare the abominations of it, and the unspeakable incommodities that issue and flow out from it, unto the danger of all them that delight in such fantasies.

XXXIX. *God's word* is most highly worthy to be wished and desired; as the psalmist saith, The commandments of the Lord are more worthy to be desired than gold and precious stones.

Man's invention is most worthy to be despised and cast away, forasmuch as it is nothing else than the wicked imagination of filthy flesh, and by that means hated of God, and of all good men.

XL. *God's word* is the doctrine of righteousness, unity, peace, faith, love, patience, mercy, and of all goodness and godliness.

Man's invention is the word of unrighteousness, discord, disquietness, unbelief, enmity, vengeance, unmercifulness, and of all evil and mischief.

XLI. *God's word* is the word of the eternal Father, and of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour; which word only the congregation of God admits and receives to be sound and true doctrine, and will be ruled by it alone; admitting and approving no kind of doctrine but what consents and agrees with this word of God in all points.

Man's invention is the word of the devil, the prince of darkness, and of the venomous snake of human wisdom, which the church malignant, despising God's word, and being blinded and deceived with carnal reasons, receives and believes, and is content to be ruled and governed by that alone, unto the endless damnation of bodies and souls.

CONCLUSION.

Thus have we heard what a precious treasure and heavenly jewel the most sacred Scripture and holy WORD OF GOD is, and what incomparable commodities the knowledge thereof brings, both to the souls and bodies of all such as unfeignedly receive it.

We have heard also, on the contrary part, what a wicked devil, what a grievous plague, what a poisonous pestilence, MAN'S INVENTION is, and how great incommodity and evils it brings to such as embrace it, whether we respect body or soul. It therefore now remains that every faithful man be jealous for the word of God. Let us all with one consent desire that it may reign in the hearts of all men, and do all our endeavour that it may so come to pass and soon. Let us not fear the torments and menacing words of the cruel and fierce tyrants, who can do nothing but slay the body. Let us rather for the zeal of God's glory, for the advancement of his holy word, and for the profit of the brethren, be ready to suffer whatsoever shall be laid upon us by the bloody tyrants, and boldly say with David, My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready. And while we yet live, for the good performance hereof, let us cry, preach, teach, exhort, write, and admonish one another, and stir up all others to do the same, that the execrable and damnable inventions and traditions of the flesh may be plucked up by the roots, abolished, and for ever perish. Again, that the pure word of God, which is our only joy and comfort, our only joy and solace, may be faithfully believed, and earnestly obeyed and practised by all nations in every place, that the kingdom of this world may be made the kingdom of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom alone be all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SELECT SERMONS

FROM

A NEW POSTILL;

CONTAINING MOST GODLY AND LEARNED SERMONS UPON ALL THE SUNDAY GOSPELS THAT BE READ IN THE CHURCH THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

LATELY SET FORTH UNTO THE GREAT PROFIT, NOT ONLY OF ALL CURATES AND SPIRITUAL MINISTERS, BUT ALSO OF ALL OTHER GODLY AND FAITHFUL READERS.

PRINTED 1566.*

Like as the rain and snow cometh down from heaven, and returneth not thither again, but watereth the earth, and maketh it fruitful and green, that it may give corn to the sower and bread to the eater; so the word also that cometh out of my mouth shall not return again void unto me, but shall accomplish my will, and prosper in them unto whom I send it.—Isaiah lv.

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.—Rom.

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* When speaking of the early part of the reign of queen Elizabeth, Strype, in his life of Parker, says:—Thomas Becon, a famed preacher and writer, living at Canterbury, where he had a prebend, was employed in a very useful work at this season, namely, in providing the church with a postill, containing honest plain sermons for all the Sundays in the year, upon the Gospels, beginning with the first Sunday in advent; to be read by the curate to his congregation. To which Becon added a large preface, addressed to his fellow-labourers in the Lord's harvest, the ministers and preachers of God's most holy word, wherein he earnestly exhorted them to the faithful discharge of their weighty duty. To which postill are prayers added, one of them to be said before sermon, either the longer or the shorter one, according to the minister's discretion, and another prayer or thanksgiving to be said after sermon. These prayers and these sermons were framed for ministers who had not ability to invent and compose prayers and sermons themselves, that the people might be instructed in sound and wholesome doctrine, whatsoever the abilities of the ministers were under whom they happened to live.

Becon only speaks of these postills as being "set forth by him," and Strype considers that they were translated from the Latin or German; they however contain passages which evidently appear to be original. They may, in fact, be considered as "village" or "cottage" sermons.

THE

SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

The Gospel for the Sunday next before Easter, commonly called Palm Sunday.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, &c.—Matthew xxvi.

This day is read in the church, as you have heard, the story of the painful passion and dreadful death of our most loving Lord and sweet Saviour Jesus Christ. And although the passion of Christ ought at all times, and every day, diligently to be remembered by us and every Christian, seeing it is that only and alone precious treasure, whereby we are delivered and set at liberty from all the power of hell, from Satan, sin, death, damnation, &c.; yet the ancient fathers of Christ's church, in times past, have well provided that we should have every year a certain peculiar time appointed for this purpose, in the which we might do and exercise this, either privately or publicly. For by this means the passion of Christ shall be more diligently inculcated and beaten into the youth, and also be the more surely engrafted in the memory of the elder sort of people. Now forasmuch as the passion of Christ hath in times past been marvellously abused by vain meditations and cogitations of superstitious and ignorant hypocrites, we will at this present leave all such vanity, and declare how the passion and death of Christ ought truly and profitably to be considered, weighed, and pondered, unto our singular consolation and comfort, and also unto the amendment of our life and conversation. This will be brought to pass if we diligently weigh, ponder, and consider these principal points following.

I. What the passion of Christ is.

II. What excited and moved him to suffer this passion.

III. How Christ both outwardly and inwardly suffered.

IV. What fruit and profit he has procured and gotten for us by his passion.

I. The passion of Christ is none other than an immeasurable dolour, sorrow, torment, and pain, which he, from

a singular and unspeakable love towards us, sustained and suffered for our sins, that he might purge them and utterly put them away through his satisfaction, outwardly in his body, and inwardly in his soul, till at the last he died on the cross; which shall be opened and declared more plainly hereafter.

II. There are five causes that moved Christ to suffer his most dolorous and painful passion. The first is our sin, which could no otherwise be cleansed, and put away, but only by the passion and death of Christ. The second cause is, the great and unspeakable charity, love, and favour that Christ and his heavenly Father bore toward us men, which charity could not abide that we should perish and be damned in our sins. The third cause is, the everlasting counsel and providence of God, whereby he determined by this means to show his love and to deliver mankind from sin. The fourth cause is, the true and faithful promise which he made in times past. Out of which, afterwards follows the blindness and indignation of the Jews, which is the fifth cause.

As touching the first cause, I mean, our sin, the holy prophet Isaiah speaks in this manner; He was wounded, even to the death, for our sins, and broken in pieces for our wickednesses. In these words the prophet declares, wherefore Christ was so evil handled and so grievously punished—verily not for his own sin. For he is the only begotten and dearly-beloved Son of God, who never committed sin, neither was there ever found any guile in his mouth; yea, for our sin, for thine iniquities and mine, was he wounded and broken in pieces. Therefore saith the prophet, For our sin. Now that he saith "our," that is, for the sin of all men he suffered and died. For when he had once taken upon him our infirmities and diseases, then must he also die for our sins and wickednesses, as the prophet saith in the before recited chapter, The Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all upon him. And a little after, the prophet, speaking in the person of God, saith, For the sin of my people have I stricken and smitten him. And in the end of this chapter he saith, He bare the sins of many, and paid for transgressors. David in like manner complains in a certain psalm, and, speaking in the person of Christ, saith, The rebukes of them which rebuked thee, (he meaneth the heavenly Father,) fell on me. And a little before, he says, I paid the things that I never took. We

have grievously offended God, dishonoured his holy name, and greatly obscured his glory; all this must Christ pay, satisfy, and make amends for. Therefore saith Peter in his first epistle, Christ suffered once for our sins, the just for the unjust. Hereof it follows that not the Jews who lived at that time, neither the soldiers, nor yet Pilate, Herod, &c., alone are guilty of the passion and death of Christ, but also all sorts of us, who all without exception have sinned. For, for our sins was Christ slain and nailed on the cross. Neither are we better than they that crucified him. Although the Jews did not know him as the Son of God, otherwise they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, yet for all that, even of mere malice and envy against him, they laid hands on him as a guiltless man, accused him, and slew him. But he had never come to that point if our sins had not been, for the which he was stricken, wounded, and slain. So likewise made we him to serve in our sins, and caused him much sorrow with our iniquities. Therefore let us no more be angry with that miserable caitiff Judas, with Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, Annas, &c., as the manner heretofore has been; yea, rather let every man be angry with himself, accuse himself, and impute the fault to himself, as unto him who, for his sins did cast Christ, that innocent Lamb of God, into this most horrible and intolerable pain.

The second cause is, the exceeding great charity, love, and mercy of God, which he showed unto us miserable men and wicked sinners, without any merit or desert on our behalf, wherewith the heavenly Father being moved, spared not his only begotten Son, as St. Paul saith, but for us delivered him up even unto death. This St. John declares in his epistle, saying, In this hath the love of God appeared, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to make satisfaction for our sins. And Christ himself saith, God hath so dearly loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have life everlasting. This charity and love moved Christ also to obey his Father, so that he came down into this world, and took our sins upon him; as the prophet Isaiah saith, In his love and in his favour hath he redeemed them. Paul saith, God setteth forth his love marvellously towards us in this, that when we were yet

sinners, Christ died for us. And Christ himself saith, No man hath a greater love than this, that a man should give his life for his friends. Of these places of Holy Scripture before alleged, it appears evidently that the second cause of the death of Christ is, the love of God toward all mankind, whom our miserable and wretched state did so greatly move and strike with tender compassion, that he sent his only begotten Son into this world, who also of very love toward man, obeyed his Father's will, even unto the death, the most ignominious and spiteful death of the cross, and gave him over into the hands of sinners, that he, by his death and passion, might deliver us from everlasting death and damnation. Whereof we may learn to love one another, and so to be minded one to another, as Christ was minded toward us. Of this St. John admonishes and teaches us in his epistle, where he saith, In this have we known love, that he gave his life for us, and we ought to give our lives for our brethren. Paul also, in his epistle to the Philippians, exhorts us, that after the example of Christ, we should humble ourselves, and serve one another, even as Christ served us.

The third cause is, the everlasting counsel and providence of God, who, by his unspeakable wisdom, determined from everlasting to deliver mankind by the death of his Son, before the world was made; as Peter in his sermon testifies, where he after many words of the crucifying of Christ, said thus: Him (Christ) have ye taken by the hands of unrighteous persons, after he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and have crucified and slain him. And Christ himself in the gospel tells before hand in many places, and gives his disciples forewarning, how this passion and death shall chance and come unto him, by the everlasting counsel and decree of his heavenly Father. As he said also unto Pilate, Thou shouldest have no power at all over me, except it were given thee from above.

The fourth cause is, the faith and truth of God. For when this counsel was determined from everlasting, then God would not have kept it in secret, but opened the same before, many times; and promised that Saviour in many places of Scripture, by his holy prophets, as St. Paul testifies in his epistles. This promise would God, as the everlasting truth, perform, and according to his promise, send the Saviour, suffer him to be crucified and slain, as

witnesses St. Peter in the chronicle of the apostles' acts, written by blessed Luke. God, saith he, hath performed those things which he before declared by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, &c. Christ also, after his resurrection, spoke thus with the two disciples that were journeying towards Emmaus; It was necessary that all things should be fulfilled that are written of me in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the psalms. What testimonies there are of the passion of Christ in the Scriptures of the old testament, you may easily see in the evangelical history of the passion and death of Christ, which I would wish you diligently to note for the confirmation of your faith in this behalf.

The last cause is, the hardening and blindness of the Jews, who, through their great contumacy and stubbornness, and through their impenitence or unrepentant hearts, being forsaken of God, were punished and blinded, that they should hear and not understand, that they should see with their eyes, and discern nothing, as it is written in the Scriptures. By this means they slew the Son of God, and so provoked the fierce vengeance and hot wrath of God against them; as the apostle saith, The wrath of God is come on them even to the uttermost. For although God from everlasting had determined that his Son Christ should suffer and die, and it could none otherwise be but as God had before decreed, yet were not the Jews excused. For they found no cause of death in him. And although they did not know that he was the Son of God, yet they knew this for a certainty, that he was a godly and innocent man, whom they of mere envy and malice slew, as Pilate against himself testified, saying, I find no cause of death in him. Therefore they sought another thing than God did, who appointed his Son to suffer and to die, that he by his sufferings and death might deliver them that believe, from sin, death, the devil, and hell, and that he by his resurrection, might be glorified, and obtain a most worthy renown. But Satan, with his members, the scribes and pharisees, sought another thing, even to slay Christ, to bring Christ to shame, and utterly to root him out of remembrance, both him and his doctrine, that there might be no more mention made of him; and so the wicked Jews, through their envy, their blinded hearts, and their ungracious counsel, executed, contrary to their will and device, the decree and determination of the heavenly Father, whereby, through

the mercy of Christ dying for them, health and salvation came to so many as believe. Yea, the ungodly Jews, deservedly blinded, were disappointed of their purpose, and advanced Christ unto glory whom they determined utterly to destroy; as it is written, The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, and maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect. But the counsel of the Lord shall endure for ever, and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation.

When we earnestly consider these causes, then shall we see what miserable and damnable sinners we are; verily, even such as could none otherwise be saved, but only by Christ, so that for us and our salvation, he must needs die, yea, and that the most ignominious and spiteful death of the cross. Again, we shall see the most burning heat and incomparable fire of the love of our heavenly Father, and of his Son Christ, who having no regard to our sins, nor yet that we were his enemies, died for us that we should not perish in our sins. Moreover we see, how faithful and true God is, and that all his words and promises will take place and proceed, against all the violence, force, power, strength, craft, and subtlety of the devil and the world; and that heaven and earth shall sooner fall, perish, and come to nought, than one jot or tittle of God's word shall be found untrue and false. By the first, we learn of the law how great and horrible a thing sin is, before the eyes of God's majesty; for the abolishing whereof the only and innocent Son of God must be scourged, and die so bitter, ignominious, and spiteful a death; yea, and that only to take away other men's sins. By the second, we learn the gospel, and the loving, gentle, and merciful heart of God toward us, who for us and for our salvation, sent his only begotten Son, that incomparable treasure, into this world, and suffered him to be nailed on the cross. By the third, we learn assuredly to trust and believe the promise of God, and not to fear the ungodly and wicked persecutors, forasmuch as we see that he has so faithfully and so abundantly performed by his Son, all that ever he promised. Again, he has confounded and brought to shame the devil and all his children of this world, and has made frustrate and void all their devices, counsels, and imaginations, insomuch that whereas they thought with this their work, utterly to kill, confound, and extinguish Christ, they have most of all advanced Christ unto his great honour and

glory, and by this means brought to pass, that all the faithful shall receive salvation by this crucified Christ. For how could Satan and the stiff-necked pharisees think that Christ should be brought by death unto life, by burial unto resurrection, by ignominy and contempt unto glory and honour, and made king and ruler over all creatures both in heaven and in earth? But mighty is the Lord our God to perform his promise, and to confound the world with his god, the devil, as he doth and shall do, even to the end of the world.

III. But now followeth the third thing which we ought to consider, about the passion of Christ. This is, how great pain and affliction Christ suffered inwardly and outwardly. Of the external passion and outward suffering, we have abundantly in the evangelical history, where we read how he was taken, spit upon, whipped, beaten, crowned with thorns, and at the last crucified and put to death. Of the inward passion and suffering that he had in his heart and conscience, when he must strive with death, which was before his eyes, hell, and the devil, Luke writes in his gospel on this manner, He was in an agony, and prayed the longer, and his sweat was like drops of blood trickling down to the ground. Of which words, the exceeding great horror and torment which Christ suffered in his conscience, may be esteemed and judged, and how horrible the sight of death, of sin, which he took on him, of hell, and the devil, was before him, seeing that his sweat, contrary to all reason of nature, was bloody, and so came from him. Again, in that the Comforter and Creator of all the world was cast into such necessity and fear, that his Father sent an angel unto him to comfort him, as Luke also testifies. That strife of death is fearful beyond all measure, and takes away all strength of nature, as we see in condemned persons, who are suddenly taken to be put to death. What a marvellous torment and anger there appears in them, till nature has made herself captive to death, so that the pain and death itself may justly seem to be nothing in comparison of that great agony, trouble, and fear! How exceedingly great and immeasurable it was in Christ, his bloody sweat that came from him manifestly declares. This calamity and fearfulness was afterward wonderfully increased, when he, hanging upon the cross, was forsaken of all his disciples and friends; also mocked, scornfully and spitefully railed on by his enemies, insomuch

that he, being in such an agony, cried out unto his heavenly Father, saying, O my God, O my God, why hast thou forsaken me; whereof we may read more at large in the twenty-second psalm of David. In which psalm, the prophet has exactly painted and set forth the bitter complaints, and the afflicted conscience of Christ, miserable and forsaken; where also thou shalt find in what anguish and affliction he was for our sins. And here let us learn, as we said before, the high hatred, great displeasure, and extreme wrath that God bears against sin, insomuch that because of it he would not spare his only-begotten and dearly-beloved Son, nor yet forgive him, seeing he took upon him the cause of other men's sins, as we may see in the prophet Isaiah. And St. Paul saith, He spared not his only begotten Son. This Christ also signified, when he spake to the woman thus, If they do this in a moist tree, what shall be done in a sear and dry tree? As though he should say, Learn of me, who bear other men's sins, and in myself am innocent, righteous, and holy, what punishments ye have deserved, and what shall befall you who by nature are sinners and wicked, and can do nothing that is good. Therefore Christ warns the women to weep for themselves, who with their sins had deserved that pain and punishment which he now must suffer. In consideration whereof St. Peter saith, If the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?

For God has here plainly and evidently set forth before our eyes in Christ, his anger, wrath, and displeasure against sin; seeing that he suffered the high goodness, innocence, wisdom, justice—even his only begotten Son, to come into extreme poverty, pain, contempt, and ignominy because thereof, as though he were the greatest enemy that God hath, and such a one as is not worthy to live on the ground. Yea, God did so show himself toward him, as though he had given him over for ever and ever, and would never after be reconciled unto him, as Christ miserably complains in the twenty-second psalm. And all this came to pass for other men's sins, which Christ took upon him! O how horribly shall God avenge sins in them that naturally are prone and bent unto sin, and can do no otherwise than sin and do wickedly, seeing he declared this so severely in his Son, in whom, notwithstanding, he had a singular delight, and great pleasure! Oh how grievously will he punish them who confess not their sins, yea, who

will be counted holy and righteous, and will by no means receive Christ to be their sufficient Saviour and perfect Redeemer, to purge and put away their sins, but will rather cleave to their own righteousness, to their own works, and to the merits and intercessions of others! Therefore let all true and faithful Christians diligently consider this, and with all study and labour beware of sin, and of the wrath of God, seeing it cost the Son of God the price of his life, seeing also that for the avoiding of the same, he was enforced to suffer most grievous pain, great and bitter sorrow, and at the last the most ignominious and shameful death of the cross, that by this means he might appease the wrath of God, kindled against man for sin, deliver man from sin, reconcile man to his heavenly Father, and make him inheritor of everlasting glory.

IV. Let us consider the fruits and profits of the passion and death of Christ. For this is our joy and comfort; verily as they are great, so are they infinite and innumerable, if they were weighed, pondered, and considered, diligently and at large. For Christ is that true wheat corn, whereof he himself speaks in the gospel of John, saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except the wheat corn fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit. Of these many fruits, we will declare some, yea, and those the chief and principal. For those being known and perfectly believed, no man shall lightly waver in his conscience, nor yet despair through pusillanimity and weakness of mind, but he shall be comforted and lifted up, with a sure hope of the merits of Christ's passion, and always stand firm and constant in all assaults of the enemy.

The first fruit of Christ's passion is, that Christ, God and man, by his death has redeemed and delivered us from the curse of the law. For seeing that the heart of man by nature is evil, and there is no man that doeth good, but all of us, in the judgment of God, are sinners and liars; the curse of the law by this means comes upon us, and condemns us as despisers and transgressors of the law, and saith, Cursed be every one that abideth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, that he may do them. From this curse and judgment of the law, hath Christ delivered us, who hath taken upon him our cause and satisfied the law, that so many as put their confidence, faith, and trust in him, he should make free from such

eurse, sentenee, and judgment of the law; and so by his death he hath redeemed and delivered us from the law, so that it can no more eondemn us. As St. Paul testifies in his epistle to the Galatians, saying, Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, while he beeame aecursed for our sake. Now how Christ became aecursed, Paul deelares more at large, and saith, It is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on the tree. This sentence of the law was general over all that were crucified and put to death on the eross. Among whom Christ also came, and outwardly suffered the ignominy and curse of the law, and was reputed, taken, and judged as a malefactor and wicked person. But Christ, by suffering the outward curse and condemnation of the law, without deserving it, overeame and utterly put away the inward curse and eondemnation of the law; so that for ever after, it ean no more bind us, nor hurt so many as believe in Christ. For although outwardly we are cursed, evil spoken of, despised, and condemned, as it befel Christ, and must needs so likewise come to pass with us, for we must be made conformable and like unto Christ in bearing the cross, yet inwardly we are free and blessed, and the curse of the law cannot prevail against us, neither can the law itself any more accuse us and condemn us. For if God, through Christ, be with us, who can be against us? So likewise we read in St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians; When the fulness of time was eome, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made subject to the law, that he might deliver them that were bound by the law. Christ, for our sake, fell into the law, that is to say, under the pain of the law, that we might be delivered from the same, and obtain that portion of inheritanee which is due to the sons of God. Whereof the prophet Isaiah also saith, Ye are freely bought, ye shall freely be delivered. St. Peter also saith, We are delivered by the precious blood of Christ, that innoeent Lamb of God.

The second fruit and profit of the passion of Christ is, that by it we are made free from sin; and it is in a manner the same with the first. For when we are free from the law, then are we also free from sin; not that we sin not, or eannot offend, but that sin is no more imputed unto us, nor brought in against us by the law. Therefore saith blessed John in his epistle, The blood of Christ maketh us clean from all sin. And Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews saith, that the blood of Christ purges our

conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Again, to the Corinthians, he saith, God made Him that knew no sin, sin for our sake, that in Him we might be made that righteousness which is allowed before God. Christ, for our sake, was made sin, that is to say, a sacrifice and oblation for sin, and by this means hath he reconciled us unto God, and made us before God, of unrighteous, righteous, of sinful and wicked, perfect and good.

Now forasmuch as we are free from the curse of the law and from sin, it follows that we also are free and safe from death, the devil, and hell, which is the third fruit of Christ's passion. For, seeing death is the stipend and reward of sin, as the apostle saith, and sin is abrogated and taken away from us by the passion and death of Christ, it follows that death is also taken away, so that it hath no power against us. Therefore doth Christ threaten death by the prophet, and saith, O death, I will be thy death. For seeing that Christ was the true life, he could not be overcome of death, but he, being the noble conqueror and valiant victor over death, took away the sting from death, and slew hell. As Christ himself saith by the aforesaid prophet, I will deliver them from hell, and from death will I make them safe. So was Satan also cast out, as Christ saith in the gospel of John, so that he cannot execute against us the pain of hell and death. And all this is come to pass, because Christ hath fulfilled the law for us, and purged our sins by the sprinkling of his blood.

The fourth fruit and profit of the passion of Christ is, that we are not only delivered from the law, sin, death, hell, and the devil, but we are also, through the merits of Christ's passion, received into the grace and favour of God. For he hath satisfied the Father for us, and hath reconciled us unto him, as Paul testifies, saying, When we were yet enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son. Again, God hath reconciled us unto him by Christ Jesus. Once again, God the Father hath delivered us from the powers of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his well-beloved Son. Yea, we are not only by the death of Christ reconciled and set at one with God the Father, but also with all the angels and heavenly spirits. For when the Father, through his Son, favours us, and is merciful unto us, then all creatures do the same through him, and are at concord and perfect agreement with us. As St. Paul saith, It pleased the Father that all fulness

should dwell in him, and by him to reconcile all things to himself; pacifying by the blood of his cross things both in heaven and in earth. And ye which some time were far off, and enemies in your minds through evil works, hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh by death, that he should make you holy, blameless, and without fault in his sight. And in many places it is declared, how we are reconciled and set at one with the Father, and made heirs of the kingdom of heaven through Christ.

The fifth fruit and profit of the passion of Christ is the new testament, in which he promises unto us, and bequeaths unto us remission of sins sealed and confirmed with the death and blood of Christ; as it is written, He is the Mediator of the new testament, that through death, which came for the redemption of those transgressions that were in the first testament, they who were called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For wheresoever a testament is, there must also be the death of him that maketh the testament. For the testament takes authority when men are dead, for it is of no value as long as he that made it is alive. Of these words it evidently appears that the new testament, wherein we have remission of sins, is sealed and ratified by the death of Christ. Therefore Christ calls the cup, the cup of the new testament in his blood, which is shed for the remission of sins.

Last of all, Christ with his death and passion has gotten unto us this fruit and profit, that our cross and sufferings please God, that after this it should no more be a cursing or pain, but a holy blessing and mortifying of our old Adam and wicked flesh. And by this means our tribulation, persecution, and death is a holy and acceptable sacrifice unto God. And all this comes to pass through the merits of Christ and his death; as Paul saith to the Romans, Those which he knew before, he also ordained before, that they should be like fashioned unto the form of his Son, that he might be the first begotten Son among many brethren. As the sacrifice of Christ and his death, was a pure and acceptable sacrifice to God; so likewise the death of all Christians shall be a holy sacrifice to God, not for the dignity of itself, but for Christ, of whose fulness all we have received, even grace for grace.

Now forasmuch as we know the fruit and profit, and also the whole work, which Christ has brought to pass by his passion and death; let us now learn how we may be

made partakers of the same, and heneeforth so frame our lives agreeably thereunto, that we may follow Christ our Saviour, and be known to be like him, yea, his true disciples.

Verily then shall we be partakers of the benefits of Christ, of the fruits and profit of his passion, when we believe that we all were eondemned sinners. Again, that Christ even of mere love and favour, unto our profit and singular advantage, without any of our merit and desert, suffered all that ever he suffered. Also, that by none other Mediator or work, but by Christ alone and by his merit, we can be saved, so that the passion, death, resurrection, life, righteousness, and innoeeney of Christ, with all that ever he hath, is our own, and freely given unto us of our heavenly Father. Wherefore, St. John saith, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, even so many as believe in his name. It is eertain and sure that no one can be the son of God, exeept he be holy, godly, and righteous. But this we eannot be of ourselves, of our own strength and works. Therefore he saith that Christ giveth this unto us. It then follows, that by Christ we have reeeived that which we had not before, neither could we deserve to have with our works. Whereby then did this come unto us? Verily by faith: for John saith, that he gave them power to be made the sons of God, even so many as believe in his name. This power then have they only that believe, not in their own works and righteousness, but in the name of Christ, which is Jesus, that is to say, a Saviour; even that they should believe that he is the only, alone, and true Saviour, without whom we ean do nothing, and without whose merits all our works, although ever so holy and good, are damnable and cursed. Thus by faith alone, we obtain all that Christ hath, and are partakers of the same; as his innoeency, holiness, righteousness, wisdom, perfeetion, the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life; not that faith is our work, and therefore so nobly reeompensed, but that it is the hand, organ, and instrument, wherewith we take and lay hold on Christ our Saviour. For every thing is prepared, given, and purchased for us before, and faith does no more than take and embraee this benefit, cleaves surely unto it, and doubts not but that Christ has obtained and performed all things for her. For Christ is freely given unto us, to be our Saviour whom the Father hath set forth unto us, to be our merey-stoek, so that whosoever will have

and enjoy everlasting salvation, must have and enjoy it by Christ, and by none other. Therefore ought we all to lay hand on him with a strong and unshaken faith. But he that will not receive him as his one only, alone, and all-sufficient Saviour, but will cleave to his own works and righteousness, without fail shall be damned. For to this end we have Christ given us of God the Father, to be our Saviour, that by him we should have power to be made the sons of God, I mean all such as believe in his name, deny and forsake themselves and their works, and only joy, rejoice, and glory in the name of Christ, wishing and desiring only, by that name to be made holy and acceptable before the presence of God's majesty.

When we have thus, through faith and confidence in Christ, challenged unto us Christ and all his merits, with all the fruits, advantages, and profits that he got, either by his life or by his death, as our own and proper goods, then let us also endeavour ourselves to set Christ before us as an example, whose life and conversation, whose acts and deeds, we ought to follow. For although, as we heard before, we deserve nothing by our works, yet may we not be without good works in this life. Therefore let us frame all our lives, and all that ever we do, after the example of Christ, whom the Scripture sets forth unto us two manner of ways. First, as a Saviour, and this is the principal part of our righteousness. Secondly, as an example; that with him we should mortify and slay old Adam; as St. Paul saith, So many of us as are baptized in Christ, are baptized into his death, that is to say, that we should crucify with him our flesh and wicked lusts, suppress them, and give no place to the wicked appetites of the flesh. So do we declare ourselves to be true Christians, as the apostle saith, They that belong unto Christ, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof. For he that truly knows sin, and the wrath of God against sin, and how dearly Christ bought us, and paid our ransom that we might be delivered from it, will undoubtedly hate sin from the very bottom of his heart. And when he shall not be able to resist, he will be inwardly sorry, and study all means possible how he may repress that sin, and be able to tame and restrain that wicked flesh. Again, if he truly believe how loving, merciful, and gentle, God has shown himself toward him through Christ our Saviour, and how God has pleasured him freely and without deserving, he shall greatly be stirred

up to serve and please God, and for his sake love his neighbour, whom God hath commended unto him, not only if he be his friend, but also though he be his very enemy. For Christ received him, and by his passion and death saved him, even then when he was his enemy.

Thus the true, diligent, and earnest consideration of the passion of Christ, works in us true fruits and good works, that is to say, the mortifying and crucifying of old Adam; as Paul saith, They that have put on Christ, he meaneth by faith, or they that are of Christ, have crucified their flesh, with all her concupiscences; yea, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; so that we, in the passion, cross, and death of the old man, should be made like to Christ, to his passion and death. For so hath God ordained.

Thus briefly have we declared how we ought truly to consider the passion of Christ, with the fruits and causes thereof; by the which passion and death we are delivered from Satan, from sin, from the curse of the law, from desperation, from death, from hell, from the wrath of God, and from everlasting damnation; and are translated and removed into the heavenly country, that glorious kingdom of the most glorious God. Last of all, we opened unto you how we ought by faith to take and challenge unto us those most singular and inestimable benefits, and so form and frame our conversation and life after the example of Christ, that it may outwardly appear, that we are the thankful disciples of Christ, and the faithful and loving children of the heavenly Father. And forasmuch as we cannot do this of our own strength and power, let us most humbly pray unto God, that he, for Christ Jesus' sake, may give us his strength and Spirit, that we may live before him in pure faith and unfeigned love, and in the great day of the Lord appear faultless among the dear and well-beloved children of God, and so hear out of his mouth who suffered and died for us, this most sweet and comfortable saying: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world. To this Lord Christ, our only Saviour and most perfect Redeemer, with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, our most sweet Comforter, be all honour, glory, and praise, for ever. Amen.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

The Gospel for Easter Day.

The first day of (after) the Sabbath came Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, &c.—John xx. 1—10.

Inasmuch as on this day, according to the ancient and commendable custom of Christ's church, we celebrate the laudable feast, and worthy memory of the most noble and victorious resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ; it is meet and convenient that we speak and treat of the same at this present. For the true sanctifying and hallowing of festival days consists in the true worshipping of God, which is none other thing (prayers and thanksgiving being once done,) than to exercise the word, both in preaching and reading. We therefore will confer according to the season, of the glorious resurrection of our most loving Lord and sweet Saviour Christ Jesus. And we will *first* of all consider, what manner of resurrection the rising again of Christ from death unto life was. After that we will in the *second* place declare what utility and profit, what fruit and goodness, the most victorious and triumphant resurrection of Christ hath brought unto us, as we have before showed of his passion and death.

I. As touching the first, let us not think that the resurrection of Christ was a common resurrection from death, as the resurrection of Lazarus; but besides that Christ rose again in the flesh and corporeally, he also spiritually became the Lord of death and overcame it, and brought with him everlasting life, so that all who believe are risen again with him, and have overcome death. And by this his resurrection he hath not only obtained a temporal life, but also a spiritual life. For as he before by the temporal death of the cross, did slay and utterly abolish the spiritual death of sin and hell; so likewise by his resurrection, he hath not only recovered and brought again the temporal life and quietness, but also everlasting life and perpetual joy. Whereof we may learn that Christ is risen again two manner of ways. First, after the flesh, by which resurrection he made his dead body alive again, his despised

body glorious, his weak and feeble body mighty and strong, his natural body supernatural and spiritual.

Of this resurrection we read in many places of the Scripture. Among them Paul has these words in the chronicle of the apostles' acts, where he speaks on this manner; And we show unto you that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled to their children, even unto us, in that he raised up Jesus; as it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And in his first epistle to the Corinthians, he saith that Christ after his resurrection, was seen of more than five hundred brethren at once. And moreover that he showed himself before to the twelve, and to many other brethren, as we may see plainly written in the evangelists.

Secondly, there was in Christ also an inward and spiritual resurrection, in that he escaped from the horror of death, hell, sin, and the wrath of God, and came unto everlasting joy, life, health, peace, and gladness. Of this he glories, and speaks by the mouth of that prince-like prophet, saying, Thou hast made the ways of life known to me; thou shalt fill me full of gladness with thy countenance. Again, Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. All these are gratulations, rejoicings, and thanksgivings, that God the heavenly Father hath delivered his Son Christ from the horror of hell and death; and not him only, but also with him and through him, all faithful Christians. Whereof we shall speak more largely hereafter.

How the resurrection of Christ was done, how he rose again on Easter-day in the morning before the sun, and how the women found the sepulchre empty; again, how they were comforted of the angel and admonished of his resurrection—these with divers other things are written by the four evangelists, and ye yourselves have heretofore both heard and read them. Therefore at this time we will rather declare and set forth unto you, the profits and fruits which Christ hath gotten for us, by his glorious and royal resurrection; and open to you how we ought to enter into a new life with Christ.

But before we come unto this matter, let us speak somewhat of the innocency and Godhead of Christ, by which he mightily broke the jaws of hell, and burst in pieces the body of death, and so valiantly, victoriously, and triumphantly rose again from death. Now forasmuch

as Christ was in all points pure and innocent, and utterly without all sin; death and hell could by no means overcome him. For seeing that death is the reward of sin, as the apostle saith, and Christ had no sin at all, so it right well follows, that death had no power over Christ, and that it assaulted him without cause; and therefore death lost his right, because without cause he abused Christ, who was innocent and free from all sin. The innocency of Christ was the cause that death and hell (they only have power over sinners, for by sin entered death into the world,) could not retain, hold, and devour him, but that he must needs return unto life, and rise again from death.

Besides this innocency, Christ also had this, that he was the true and natural Son of God, and therefore he could not be retained and holden of death, nor yet of hell, nor of any other kind of misery; as he himself glories and rejoices of this power, saying, That he hath power to give over his life, and also to take it again. And that no man taketh his life from him, but he giveth it over of himself. Which is nothing else than if he should say, I am God, and the Lord both of death and of life, and I handle them as I myself list. Therefore St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, writeth, that by this he was declared to be the Son of God, when he rose again from death. For no man can escape death; as David saith, What man is he that shall live and not see death? And St. Paul to the Hebrews saith, that all men must needs once die, and after that cometh the judgment. Seeing then that Christ was not only man, but also very God, the Creator and life-giver of all creatures, yea, the Life itself, as he himself testifies in the gospel of St. John, it was not possible for death and hell to retain and overcome him; as St. Peter records in the Acts of the Apostles, saying, Whom, (he meaneth Christ,) God hath raised up, and loosed the sorrows of death, because it was impossible that he should be holden of it. For seeing he was the Holy One of God, he could not abide in hell, neither could his flesh see corruption; as St. Peter strongly proved out of David. By this it is easy to answer how this may be, that the passion and death of Christ, and the sight of the infernal condemnation, could be a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, which notwithstanding, after the severe judgment of God, ought to have been punished with everlasting pain and endless damnation? I answer, this satisfaction is of

an incomparable force, might, strength, and power, and has a marvellous energy and perfection, because of the person of Christ. For seeing Christ was true God and true man, (the Godhead and the manhood joined in one person,) and yet took upon him this work of our redemption, the pain which Christ, God and man, suffered, ought worthily to be judged and taken to be of such excellence and dignity; again, of so great and such inestimable price, that it ought to be esteemed, as it is, sufficiently great, and large enough to the uttermost, for the sins of the whole world.

For as the sin of man, wherewith the majesty of God is contemned and dishonoured, ought to be punished with perpetual and everlasting pain; so the punishment which the Son of God took upon him, ought to be, as it is undoubtedly, sufficient, full, and perfect for all that believe on him, and seek their salvation in his most blessed and glorious name. For the divine majesty is of so great glory, that all who offend it, worthily suffer everlasting pain; and again, all for whom it came into so great ignominy and torment, and supplied their duties, should have everlasting joy and gladness, and enjoy the same, world without end. Seeing then that Christ Jesus, the true Son of God, of one substance and glory with the Father, hath offered himself an oblation and sweet-smelling sacrifice to God, and by his death and passion hath satisfied for our sins; it is reasonable that for the worthiness of his person, who was both God and man, it should be also everlasting and sufficient for evermore. For consider how great, worthy, high, infinite, and everlasting, the person was that sustained this pain; so great, worthy, high, infinite, and everlasting, is this work of our redemption and satisfaction wrought by Christ, and it must endure and remain for ever and ever, in full force and strength, for so many as repent and believe in his name.

II. Now, forasmuch as we know that Christ, for his innocency and Godhead, rose again from death unto life, we will briefly rehearse the fruits, profits, and benefits which he has purchased, gotten, and deserved for us by his victorious, triumphant, and glorious resurrection. Whatsoever Christ, by his death and passion, hath gotten and deserved for us, that did he afterwards receive by his resurrection, and brought with him; so that the fruits of Christ's resurrection do not much differ from the fruits of his passion.

We will therefore speak and treat of them briefly at this present, forasmuch as we have largely spoken of them when we treated of the passion of Christ our Saviour.

The *first* fruit and profit of Christ's resurrection is, that by it we have remission of sins, although we feel them in us, and are not utterly free from them. For when Christ died for us, and yet remained not in death, which must needs have come to pass if he could not have satisfied for sins, it follows, that he, by his resurrection, brought with him remission of sins, and gave the same unto us; as blessed Paul proves in his epistle to the Corinthians, saying, If Christ be not risen again from the dead, then is your faith vain, and you are still in your sins. And again; But now is Christ risen again from the dead, being the first fruits of them that were fallen asleep. For by man came death, and by man cometh the resurrection of the dead. As by Adam all die, so likewise by Christ all shall receive life. Afterward the apostle mocketh at death and saith; O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Hereof it is evident that Christ by his death hath slain sin, as we heard in the sermon of the passion; and by his resurrection, he hath brought with him remission of sins, because all the faithful are with him risen again from sin, so that from henceforth sin cannot hurt them, although while they are in this wicked mortal body, they cannot be free from it. For Christ brought with him out of his grave, remission of sins.

The *second* fruit follows of the first, and it is this, that Christ by his resurrection has abrogated the law, that is to say, has delivered and set at liberty our conscience from it, and has given our hearts peace, tranquillity, and quietness. For, seeing that Christ by his resurrection has slain death which is the stipend of sin, and has brought with him unto us remission of sins, it necessarily follows that he has also abolished the strength of sin, which is the law, that it can no more accuse us. Therefore saith Paul, The law of the Spirit, that is to say, the gospel which quickeneth, hath delivered me from the power of sin and death. The quickening of the gospel—or in that the gospel quickeneth and maketh alive, it has its strength, power, and efficacy of the resurrection of Christ. For if Christ had not risen again, then all our preaching, and all our faith had been vain.

The *third* fruit of Christ's resurrection is, that we by his resurrection are delivered from death. In consideration whereof, Paul glories with the prophet Hosea, saying, Death is swallowed into victory. As though he should say, The glorious and victorious resurrection of Christ has swallowed up, devoured, and abolished death, so that death from henceforth can do nothing at all against us. And his cruel and terrible appearance is none other than a hornet without a sting, which looks terrible, and with its wings makes a great and dreadful noise, but yet has it lost its sting, so that it can hurt or wound no man. Our Saviour Christ saith, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And all that live and believe in me, shall never die. By which words Christ signifies that death to the faithful is nothing else than a sleep. For as he that sleepeth lives, and may rise again, so likewise he that believeth, although he die corporeally, yet he abides not in death, but returns unto life; yea, death is unto him a very gate, whereby he passes out of this miserable and sorrowful life, unto a true and an everlasting life, and is raised up from this sleep, so that for ever after he wakes and abides alive, world without end. Therefore the Holy Scriptures call the corporeal death of the faithful a sleep, as we read in many places of the Old and New Testaments.

The *fourth* fruit of Christ's resurrection is, the devastation or destruction of hell; so that now we are free and safe from everlasting pestilence and curse. For if Christ, saith St. Paul, be not risen again, then they which have fallen asleep in Christ are utterly lost. Of which words it follows, that all they are blessed which sleep in Christ, forasmuch as he is risen again from death. And therefore the prophet Hosea, and the blessed apostle St. Paul say, O hell where is thy victory? And the apostle straightway adds, Thanks be unto God which hath given us the victory through Jesus Christ. As he remained not in death, we are not lost, but are escaped out of hell and made joyful and blessed.

The *fifth* fruit and profit of Christ's resurrection is, that Christ, rising again from the dead, hath gotten for us the victory over Satan, and all his kingdom, with all his members also; as it is written, Christ, by his death, hath expelled him which had lordship over death, that is to say, the devil; that he might deliver them which, through fear of

death, were all their lifetime subject unto bondage. Christ by his resurrection, hath taken away all power from Satan; so that now he can no more exercise his tyranny against the elect and chosen people of God. For Christ hath taken him prisoner, and taken his weapons away from him, bound him, and so utterly weakened him, that he hath no power at all. And this his victory, he in his resurrection mightily declared, when he led away captive all the rulers of hell; as St. Paul saith, He hath spoiled rule and power, and made a show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them in his own person. Of this victory, Christ also speaks in a certain parable, saying, When a strong man armed watcheth his house, the things that he possesseth are in peace. But when a stronger than he cometh upon him, and overcometh him, he taketh from him all his harness wherein he trusted, and divideth his goods. So likewise the devil possessed the world, and showed his power in maintaining false worshipping of God, and divers kinds of idolatry; and by this he established his kingdom, and greatly increased the swarm of wicked and damned persons, until Christ, who was stronger than he, invaded his kingdom, and took from him his armour and weapons, that is to say, sin and death, wherewith he overcame the whole world, and made spoil of them, and by this means delivered all the faithful and elect people of God out of his kingdom, and set them free from his tyranny and power.

The *sixth* fruit of Christ's resurrection is, the preaching of the gospel. For although he preached the gospel to his disciples, and to his countrymen the Jews, before his death, yet gave he out no commission that it should be generally and universally preached to all nations, till after his resurrection. Therefore saith he in the gospel of Matthew, All power is given unto me, both in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore throughout the whole world, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. This is a most noble gift which no man is able sufficiently to express or to esteem. For all had been frustrate and void, if it had not been published and set forth abroad. For how could we believe on Christ, of whom we had not heard? As it is written, But how shall they hear without a preacher? Faith cometh by hearing, hearing cometh by the word of

God. Therefore Christ suffered, that victory over death and hell should be gained, and also that his glorious gospel should be published to the whole world, and that all nations through the preaching of the holy apostles and other godly teachers, should be invited, bidden, and called unto it.

The *seventh* fruit of Christ's resurrection is, that Christ with his rising again from death, hath justified us through faith. For as he by his death hath abolished and put away sin, even so by his resurrection hath he brought unto us righteousness; Paul saith, Christ was betrayed for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and Peter saith, Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, begat us again unto a lively hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from death, to an inheritance immortal and undefiled, and that perisheth not, reserved in heaven for you, which are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. Thus hath Christ by his resurrection, made us godly and righteous through faith, that we should not only by him be made free from sin, but also become holy and righteous in him. If, as Peter saith, we believe in God through him which raised him up from the dead, and gave the glory unto him, that we might have faith and hope toward God.

The *eighth* fruit of Christ's resurrection is, the glorious blessedness and eternal life of the soul; which follows of justification and faith, whereof the holy apostle St. Paul speaks in his epistle to the Ephesians, saying, God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us together in Christ, (by grace are ye saved,) and raised us up together with him, and made us sit together with him, among them that are in heaven. The prophet Hosea also saith, He shall make us alive after two days, and on the third day he shall raise us up, that we may live in his sight. Hereof comes it that St. Peter calls Christ, the Lord of life. For he that confesses with his mouth, and believes with his heart, that God raised up Christ, he is saved. This life and everlasting salvation, Christ by his resurrection hath purchased and given unto us. Therefore Christ said to Mary Magdalene, that she should tell his disciples, that he would go up unto his Father and to their Father. As though he said, now we have a common inheritance, one Father, one kingdom, and an everlasting life common to us all. For he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all one.

The *ninth* and last fruit of Christ's resurrection is, the glorification and dignity of our mortal bodies. For as Christ in his resurrection cast away from him all weakness of man's body, because from henceforth he should be no more mortal, weak, hungry, thirsty, nor have any other infirmities, but be immortal and without any infirmity and weakness; so shall our mortal bodies be like unto his glorious body at the resurrection of the dead, and shall ever remain in that glory and honour, world without end. Of this St. Paul speaks, saying, Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transfigure and change this our vile body, that he may make it like to his own glorious body, according to the power wherewith he is able to make all things subject to himself. And in another place, Paul rejoices with all the Christians, that we have an everlasting dwelling-place in heaven, although this our corruptible body be destroyed and put away. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then shall God bring them with him that are fallen asleep by Jesus. So shall we be glorified with Christ, as he before was glorified by his resurrection, and made his mortal body immortal, and brought it unto glory. As he also before gave a show of this matter to his disciples in mount Tabor. He that desires to have more of it, let him read 1 Corinthians xv. There shall he abundantly find how Christ rose again, and how manifold and great fruit he hath purchased and gotten for us by his glorious resurrection.

Application.—Now forasmuch as we have heard and do perfectly know, what great and singular benefits we have received by the victorious and triumphant resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;—how he hath overcome sin, death, the devil, and hell, and hath made us not only free and safe from them, but also holy, godly, and righteous through faith, so that we shall have with him everlasting life and a glorified body; it becometh us as faithful children, to take up a new, pure, sincere, uncorrupt, and faultless life; as St. Paul exhorteth us in his epistle to the Romans, saying, We are buried with Christ by baptism for to die, that likewise as Christ was raised up from death by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in a new life. Now what other thing is a new life, than to eschew sin, and to do that which is good and godly? As Paul saith, We ought no more from henceforth

to serve sin. And in another epistle he saith, that Christ died to this end for all men that they which live, should from henceforth live, not to themselves, but to Him that died for them and rose again. So likewise Paul rejoices that he liveth not, but Christ in him. And he exhorts the Corinthians, that forasmuch as they through faith in Christ are holy and righteous, and yet for the remnants of the unclean flesh are sinners and unrighteous, they would purge out that old leaven. Know ye not, saith he, that a little leaven soureth the whole lump of dough? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be new dough, as ye are sweet bread. For Christ our Passover is offered up for us. Therefore let us keep a joyous feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of maliciousness and wickedness, but with the sweet bread of pureness and truth. In which words Paul evidently expresses and requires that we should leave the old impure life which we have of Adam, and in spirit begin and exercise a new spiritual life, unto which Christ hath brought us; and that we should from time to time, if we find in ourselves any old leaven of wickedness, purge it out, and utterly cast it away from us. Therefore seeing we are risen again with Christ, let us seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; that is to say, Let us forsake earthly and transitory things, and aspire and labour forward unto heavenly and everlasting things, that the resurrection of Christ, and the benefits thereof, of which you have now heard, may be fruitful, and full of efficacy and power in us; that by our new life and Christian conversation, we may show ourselves thankful unto God, and profitable to our neighbours. Again, that they who are without, and enemies to the Christian truth, may, through our godly and honest behaviour, be converted and turn from their idolatry unto the worshipping of God; from their superstition unto God's pure religion; from corrupt and wicked manners, unto holiness and pureness of life; that by this means God our heavenly Father may be glorified both by them and by us, who unto this end hath given us his Holy Spirit, that in all points, both in body and soul, we, being holy and righteous, may serve him, even the Lord our God, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. To whom, with Christ our Lord, and the Holy Ghost, be all praise, honour, and glory, world without end. Amen.

THE

OFFICE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The Gospel for the Fourth Sunday after Easter.

Jesus said unto his disciples, Now I go my way to Him that sent me, &c.—John xvi. 5—14.

This is a most noble and exeellent gospel. For it treats especially of that high and neeessary article for. which we are, and are called, Christians. If we intend truly to have the profit and fruit that comes by it, we must diligently exercise ourselves in the meditation thereof. It is also part of that sermon which Christ made after his Last Supper. Christ would have it well beaten into all men's heads, that they should not be offended with his passion and death, nor should take it as a matter of sadness; but that we should rather use it as a confirmation of our faith, and unto the consolation and eomfort of our eonscienees; forasmuch as by this means the tyranny of the devil is destroyed, and the Holy Ghost is gotten and given unto us.

What the Holy Ghost shall do, what he shall bring, what he shall declare and teach, Christ sets forth in these words: "When the Holy Ghost shall come, he will rebuke the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Christ, in these his words, comprehends many great things, and saith, that the Holy Ghost shall not only rebuke small companies, certain kinds of men, certain nations or people, but the whole world. He had need be well feneed and armed that will take upon him to have to do with the whole world. For the world is, whatsoever hath grown up from Adam hitherto, monarehs, emperors, kings, princes, no man, no, not of the highest degree, excepted. All these must be rebuked of sin by the apostles, and by the ministers of the word, at the motion of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, by the preachers, shall rebuke them all of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, none either high or low excepted; not Jerusalem for her holiness, not Rome for her wisdom, &c. All must receive this correction and rebuke of the

Holy Ghost, that they may be saved. For all men, with all that ever they have, are under the kingdom of the devil. Neither their righteousness, nor their holiness, nor yet their good works, can be of such force and virtue, that they can help any thing at all against damnation. And this is the office that the Holy Ghost will do in the world by the apostles, men beggarly and of no reputation, even to rebuke the world of sin. It is no small thing, but a matter of weighty and great importance, to rebuke the world of high and great matters. For he hath an office to rebuke the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Seeing that all things are full of sin, and no righteousness and judgment are in the world, what shall then remain? The whole world, therefore, is condemned, together with all her righteousness, and it is openly said, that it cannot once aspire and come unto the kingdom of God, except it be delivered from sin by the Holy Ghost, and justified, and by that means escape everlasting damnation. Such sentences are there many in the Holy Scriptures; as when Paul saith, God hath comprehended all things under sin. Again, We are by nature the children of wrath. And Christ himself saith, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. It is truly the sermon of the Holy Ghost thus to rebuke the world for sin.

But what is sin? It is to rob, to kill, to commit adultery, &c. These are sins indeed, but not the chief sins which the Holy Ghost rebuketh. For there are many who are not guilty of these outward sins, but of those sins, whereof the Holy Ghost declares, all are guilty, otherwise he could not rebuke the world of them. And, to be short, this sin is, Not to believe in Christ. Of this sin, the world knows nothing. It is the whole and alone doctrine of the Holy Ghost. For the world counts those for sins only which are forbidden in the second table of Moses. Of Christ it knows nothing, much less knows that it is sin not to believe in him. But why should we with many words rebuke the ignorance of the world, seeing that even in the schools among the learned, incredulity, infidelity, or unbelief is taken for no sin, namely, for no original sin. For it belongs to no science to teach that incredulity is sin, but to the Holy Ghost. And he by this doctrine makes the whole world guilty of sin, whereas many times the world is able to prove her external justice and outward righteousness. This, therefore, is the doctrine of the Holy

Ghost, that he should reprove the whole world of sin, no man being excepted. The world has not been accustomed unto such an unwonted kind of doctrine, neither knows it at all, that it is bound to believe in Christ. Thus it thinks that, if, with the pharisee, it be no murderer, no adulterer, no unrighteous person, it is enough, and the world requires no more.

But the Holy Ghost preaches otherwise, and saith, I know well, that among men, as concerning outward and bodily righteousness, one is better than another. But this is the chief and principal sin, that all are subject unto, that is, that they do not believe in Christ Jesus. This sin, no man, except he hath learned it of the Holy Ghost seeth, knoweth, or perceiveth. Therefore, be thou bold thus to say, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin, be it monkery,* prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, or any thing else. If there be no faith in Jesus Christ, then as thou hearest here, the Holy Ghost will rebuke it. Neither is there any other way to be delivered from this sin, than to believe in Christ Jesus. No man can deny that Christ here speaks of sin, and he expounds that it is sin not to believe in him, whereof it must needs follow that whatsoever they babble of outward appearance and of good works, if there be no faith in Christ, man with all his good works and virtue is a condemned sinner, and cannot escape the rebuke of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore incredulity, or unbelief, is the principal and greatest sin, and the fountain out of which all other sins and vices do issue and spring. For where incredulity is in the heart, and men believe not in Christ, this then immediately follows, that the word of God is not regarded, but either is despised, or else utterly rejected and cast away for heresy and lies, as though the devil were the author of it. And after this, other sins follow, as disobedience toward parents, magistrates, rulers, ministers of God's word, &c. neglecting their vocation and calling, a wicked and sinful life, besides other most grievous vices, which, either for shame, or for fear of punishment, they dare not do. All these are the leaves, yea, and the whole tree of incredulity which spring out of these roots, for which the Holy Ghost rebukes the world, neither suffers he anything to resist and withstand his office.

For he that believeth not in Christ hath not the Holy

* Monastic life.

Ghost, neither can he think any godly thing aright. And although he doeth that which of its own nature is not vicious and wieked, but agreeable to the eommandments of God, yet doeth he the same, as a servant, only for fear, and not freely to show his obedience to the will of God; so that the world is even such as like a bond-slave is led by the devil, who can neither speak, do, nor think any thing that is good and godly; as St. John saith, The world is altogether set on wiekedness. The reason hereof is this, for inereduliy is the fountain and well-spring of all evil.

This rebuking of the world shall not be taken away before the last day, but it shall continually be taught that whatsoever is the world, it believes not in Christ, it pertains not unto the kingdom of Christ, but unto the devil, not only for the notorious and outward sins, but also for this prineipal and most grievous sin, I mean, incredulity, or unbelief. Neither doth this profit any thing at all, that thou keepest this or that monastic rule, that thou doest this or that work. For so long as incredulity is present, thou art a condemned sinner, neither canst thou avoid damnation, so long as thou remainest in that state. The one and only way to eseape damnation is, to give over thine inereduliy, and to believe in Christ, and to hold fast this comfort, against sin, the devil, and death.

As eoncerning faith, what it is, it is not unknown to you, and ye have many times heard, that faith is not only to know and believe that the history of Christ is true, but faithfully to be persuaded that all that ever Christ did was done for thy sake, for thy commodity and wealth, for thy health and everlasting salvation. For the devil also knoweth that Christ died, and doth certainly believe it; but he believeth not that Christ died for him and for his salvation. This faith, that all that Christ did was done for our sake and for our salvation, is only the gift of the Holy Ghost. And this is the first part of the offiee of the Holy Ghost, that all things are wrapped in sin, and that we, with all our good works are, notwithstanding, judged of the Holy Ghost to be sinners, and so condemned, forasmueh as we believe not in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us refuse and utterly cast away all unfruitful ceremonies, and idle observations of men's most idle inventions and earnal imaginations, and whatsoever we have taken upon us, to this end that we may obtain remission of our sins; and let us lay hand upon and hold fast, true faith in Christ. For these things cannot agree

together, that I should say, Christ died for me, and yet I do and observe certain works, that I may be justified and saved by them. He that cannot abide to be rebuked by the Holy Ghost for such things, it is a manifest sign that he believes not, and that he is a condemned sinner, and of the number of them that do not believe in Christ Jesus.

The second part is, that the Holy Ghost will rebuke the world of righteousness. This also is a hard saying. The world hath sin, but it hath not righteousness, neither doth it know how it should be justified and made righteous. But what is this righteousness? Law and righteousness are the chief things of the world. And the philosophers have prescribed rules and precepts of the offices and duties of righteousness, and of other virtues, that men might live an honest and civil life. Neither can it be counted unrighteous to hang up thieves, to punish adulterers, &c. Yea, it is an act both right and good. But Christ speaks not here of that righteousness which the world counteth righteousness; but of that righteousness which is of value, and will go for payment before God. He speaks not here of political and human justice or righteousness, but of that which is comprehended in this word of Christ, I go unto the Father, and ye shall see me no more. This is more mystical, and harder to be understood, than the last, where it is pronounced that it is sin not to believe in Christ. For thus men think that they have natural strength enough to live godly, to prepare themselves unto grace, and to pray for it. But Christ speaks not one word here, what I ought to do or to leave undone, but he speaketh simply and only of his own work, that is to say, that he goeth unto the Father, and we shall see him no more; and that this is our righteousness, and none other thing.

Therefore when we do determine to get true righteousness, we must not go about to obtain it with our own works, and with our own righteousness. The whole sum of the matter consists in this, and deliverance from sin is so obtained that thou knowest that Christ is gone unto the Father, although good works may not be left undone. For thou art commanded of God in the ten commandments, to do them, and diligently to exercise thyself in all good deeds commanded of God, and prescribed in his holy word. But thou mayest not add this unto them, that thou seekest to be justified, and made righteous by them. For by this is righteousness only to be gotten, that Christ is gone unto

the Father. This is the only way, and none other, whereby we are delivered from our sins and justified.

This is the whole matter, whereby we are justified, so that righteousness is not to be imputed to my strength or power, but to Jesus Christ, because he goeth unto the Father. And if we will speak it with plain words, it is thus much to say; No man is justified or saved, or delivered from sin, but by this only, that Jesus Christ hath suffered, died, and risen again. This going of Christ (or his sufferings) justifieth thee, and none other thing. Therefore this saying abides sure and certain, that there is none other righteousness and everlasting life for us than this, that the Lord Christ Jesus is gone out of this world, unto the Father. Hold fast this doctrine, and let not the devil by any means pluck it away from thee. The devil may fear me, and trouble my conscience, for of our own strength we are not able to prevail against him, but there is another way, which not I, but Christ goeth through high obedience toward his heavenly Father. Him, that is to say, Christ, shall the devil never be able to make unrighteous, or a sinner, although through sin he hath the higher hand of me. Then let this be our assured trust and exceeding great comfort; and let us steadfastly believe that by Christ's going unto the Father, we have righteousness, even the remission of our sins, and everlasting life. For faith is necessary to embrace this work of our Saviour Christ. The going and the work of Christ is certain. Christ hath finished all, so that there remains nothing but that we embrace this work of Christ with a sure and undoubted faith, and comfort ourselves therewith. Dost thou believe it? So hast thou it. Dost thou not believe it? Then hast thou nothing. This is done that we should utterly cast away our own righteousness, which is altogether spotted and impure; as the prophet saith, All our righteousnesses are as a polluted and defiled cloth; and set all our faith, hope, trust, and confidence only upon Christ alone, and upon his work, or going unto his Father, that we may be at all times certain and sure, where to rest, and of whom to seek our salvation. For if our righteousness did consist in our own works and satisfactions, in our own confession and contrition, as they preached and yet do preach in the pope's church, so should our hearts never be quiet, neither should we at any time be certain and sure of our salvation. For when should we know and be sure that we have been sorry enough,

confessed, done penance enough, and made satisfaction enough? Therefore Christ hath taken all that matter from us, and laid it upon himself, that we should lean to him alone most steadfastly, believing that his going unto the Father, his death and satisfaction, is our righteousness. For in this behalf there can be no uncertainty. For the person is such, even Christ Jesus the Son of God, as in whom no fault can be found. And he it is that doeth this work, who was ordained of the Father, that by him we might have help against sin, the devil, and death. In consideration whereof, John the Baptist calleth him the Lamb of God, saying, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

This therefore is a most perfect determination in this our gospel; that righteousness consists not in what we either do or leave undone, but in this, that Christ goeth unto the Father. Which righteousness when thou hast once gotten through faith, then do thou also good works, and apply thyself to the uttermost of thy power, to show thine obedience which thou owest unto God. For before thou hast embraced Christ with a certain and sure faith, thou canst do no good work. The Christian righteousness therefore is a most singular and excellent righteousness, which no heart can think, no reason or wisdom can conceive. All the matter is to be known and learned of the Holy Ghost. Neither though we hear it, can it otherwise be perceived than by faith alone, as Christ saith here; I go unto the Father, and ye shall see me no more. That is to say, Ye must believe, otherwise shall ye never comprehend this my work of your justification. This is the Christian righteousness which the Holy Ghost alone teacheth.

The third part is, that the Holy Ghost also rebukes the world of judgment. What manner of judgment this is, Christ showeth thus; The prince of the world, saith he, is judged. Therefore, as the Holy Ghost rebukes the world because it has sin, forasmuch as it believes not on Christ; and that it has no righteousness, because it knows not that Christ is gone to the Father, neither hath any comfort therein: so likewise he rebukes it of judgment, because it knows nothing hereof, and therefore fears where nothing is to be feared, if it would hear him and receive his word. For this is an extreme misery and a lamentable plague, to have sin and no righteousness, and besides that, not to know of consolation and comfort against sin, death, and

all other evils. In this also, saith Christ, is the office of the Holy Ghost, that he should preach of judgment and procure to be pronounced and set forth by the gospel, that the prince of the world is judged, and that therefore he cannot hurt them that believe in Christ, and put their confidence in his going unto the Father. He may vex them with divers temptations, but he can never prevail against them. For although he be the prince of the world, yet the prince is judged, he is spoiled of his palace and armour, and he is bound of Christ with the chains of darkness, as Peter speaketh. There is no cause why Christian men should fear him, or all his kingdom. For if the prince be judged, the world also, which is his kingdom, must needs be judged, and deprived of all his power.

This the ungodly know not; therefore although sometimes they hear the word and begin to believe, yet so soon as the world rages and goes about to persecute, they straightway are afraid, and fall away, both from Christ and his word, as Christ saith in the parable of the sower, part of whose seed fell upon the stones. But the Christians are constant and stand like a strong and invincible bulwark. For this voice, which rebukes the prince of the world, is always in their hearts and ears; Why shouldst thou fear? Why shouldst thou be faint-hearted, and give over to these temptations? Knowest thou not that the prince of the world is judged? He is no more a lord or a prince. Thou hast a Lord who is mightier than he, even Christ Jesus, who hath overcome and bound this prince. Therefore let him threaten, brag, and boast, let him be as mad as he please, yet fear thou not. For he shall hurt thee no more than that cruel beast, whose violence and cruelty are repressed and restrained with strong and mighty chains. If thou wilt only beware that thou comest not nigh unto him, and so willingly cast thyself into danger, thou needest not fear. Thou art without peril, he shall do thee no harm. Wherefore this only is required, that the Christians do not make light of the enemy, keep themselves in the fear of God, and diligently pray; and the enemy that is judged shall never hurt them. Contrariwise, he that will not take heed, but be secure and careless, he shall soon be cast headlong into divers perils by this prince, although judged.

And of this confirmation and strengthening they have most need, who are instruments of the Holy Ghost in the

world, and do rebuke it of sin and righteousness. For there is no accusation that the world can less bear than of sin, which is a thing most heinous, and of righteousness, of which it hath none at all. Where this public accusation is as it ought to be, the world becomes furious, makes a hurly burly, and attempts all kinds of violence and tyranny against the ministers of the word. But the Holy Ghost by this judgment sets forth consolation. For if this were not so, the preachers could never endure against the violence of the world, but must needs fear and tremble. And for this cause especially is the Holy Ghost called Paraclete, that is to say, a Comforter or an Advocate, who in adversity and trouble stands by the preachers, comforts them, and encourages them boldly and stoutly to confess the truth, forasmuch as they hear that the prince of the world is judged.

But this is the doctrine of the office of the Holy Ghost, even what mysteries of most worthy matters he shall declare, and most especially set forth unto men in this world. He can be no Christian man, who not only knows not these most excellent mysteries, but also when he knows them, does not set more by them than by all the goods in the world. For as for all other things, they are transitory, and pass away; but these things are everlasting, which shall never decay; as Paul saith, The gospel is the power of God unto salvation for so many as believe. This going away therefore, whereof Christ here speaks, is greatly to be esteemed and to be rejoiced in as a most singular benefit, for which we are bound daily to give God our heavenly Father most hearty thanks, and to desire him with fervent prayer, that we may daily more and more feel in ourselves, through faith, the fruit of this his inestimable benefit, namely, remission of sins, and everlasting righteousness; also, the consolation and comfort of this judgment, that the prince of this world is judged.

Christ then proceeds in his sermon, and saith, I have yet many things to say unto you, which you cannot now bear. But when that Spirit of truth shall come, he shall teach you all truth. How the papists interpret this sentence of Christ, it is well known. All their traditions, innovations, and alterations, they defend by this saying of Christ, and make the Holy Ghost the author of them all, as Christ had before spoken of them. But this is not true; for this is the right understanding of Christ's words, that

the Holy Ghost shall teach the apostles and the church, and instruct them concerning such matters as Christ himself had before taught them, which by reason of their carnal judgments, they could not understand, nor attain unto the knowledge thereof. No new doctrine, but the same doctrine that Christ before had taught, shall the Holy Ghost teach, as Christ declares more plainly by these his words, He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show unto you. Again, The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom my Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. The Holy Ghost opens and enlightens the dark minds of the apostles with the golden and glistering beams of his godly influence. He makes plain unto them, and unto the whole church, the true doctrine of Christ concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. He makes them to have a right judgment of Christ's kingdom, which they looked for to be a carnal and glorious kingdom in this world. He instructs them as touching the conversion of the Gentiles, and the receiving them into the number of God's people, whom they judged to be dogs and cast-aways. He teaches them that the gospel belongs no less to the Gentile than to the Jew; and that there is no respect of persons before God, but that whosoever believeth and worketh righteousness, is welcome unto him. He informs them, that they in this world should not look for wealth, glory, riches, ease, favour of men, &c.; but for the cross, trouble, affliction, persecution, loss of goods, banishment, imprisonment, and at the last, death; whereas the apostles were blinded with the vain opinion of Christ's carnal and worldly kingdom, as we may see in many places of the evangelical history that they looked for quite the contrary. These and such like things, which Christ before had taught the apostles, the Holy Ghost renewed and brought unto their remembrance; and all carnal fancies and worldly imaginations being utterly secluded and set apart, he inspired and breathed into them true judgments, and godly persuasions concerning the high mysteries of Christ's doctrine; by this means, not only delivering them from errors and false doctrine, but also making them able to do the same through the ministry of the word. For the Holy Ghost is a true interpreter of Christ's mind, and

a faithful teacher of God's holy mysteries. Whosoever hath Him for his guide, he may be sure to walk the way of truth, and to be led into the same. But whosoever hath not the Holy Ghost to be his teacher and guide, he falls into errors and heresies, and wanders from the way of truth, as many examples of all ages do prove. Men easily fall into errors when they have not the Holy Ghost to be their guide and leader. He, saith Christ, which is the Spirit of truth, even he shall lead you into all truth. He shall teach you all truth. He shall put you in remembrance of those things that I before have taught you.

Moreover Christ saith, The Holy Ghost shall show you things to come. For that also pertains unto his office, as there are examples in the Acts of the apostles. Again, he saith, He shall glorify me; that is to say, he shall replenish you with the knowledge of God, that ye will not doubt to suffer all things for my name's sake, and set more by me than by all other things in the world. These and such like shall be the offices and works of the Holy Ghost. These things can ye not now endure, neither do ye understand them. Ye must tarry till the Holy Ghost come, that by experience ye may know this doctrine. Therefore I will not speak much unto you of these things at this present. But of this one thing I will only admonish you, that ye be not dismayed nor discouraged by reason of my departure. For this my departure shall be the cause that the Holy Ghost shall be sent unto you, who shall have in the world this office of rebuking, whereby they that believe shall be delivered from sin, endued with everlasting righteousness, and be thoroughly confirmed against all kinds of adversity, trouble, persecution, &c. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant us his Holy Spirit, that by him we may be instructed in all these things, and be confirmed in the same unto the end. Amen.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

The Gospel for Whitsun Monday.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoso believeth in him should not perish, &c.—John iii. 16—21.

This gospel is one of the most notable that a man can find in the New Testament, and worthy to be commended with all kinds of commendation. But as it is not possible that a man should sufficiently express this sermon of Christ by words; first let us call unto God, that he will expound these words more plainly in our hearts than we can by our words and interpretation, and that he will enkindle them, and make them so plain, that our conscience may receive comfort and peace thereby. Amen.

The pith of this excellent sermon is, that God so greatly loved the world, that he delivered his only begotten Son for it, that we men should not die, but have everlasting life. And first let us see who is the giver. He is the Giver, in respect of whom all princes and kings, with all their gifts, are nothing in comparison. And our hearts might worthily be lifted up and exalted with a godly pride, since we have such a giver, so that all who should come unto us by any other liberality, might be counted of no price in comparison of this. For what can be set before us that is more magnificent and excellent than God almighty?

Here, God, who is infinite and unspeakable, gives after such a manner as passes also all things. For that which he gives, he gives not as wages of desert, or for a recompense, but, as the words sound, of mere love. Wherefore this gift wholly proceeds of God's exceeding and divine benevolence and goodness, as he saith, God loved the world. There is no greater virtue than love, as it may hereby be well understood, that when we love anything, we will not hesitate to put our life in danger for it. Verily, great virtues are patience, chastity, sobriety, &c., but yet they are nothing to be compared with this virtue, which comprises and includes within itself all other virtues. A good man does no man wrong, he gives every man his own; but by love, men give their own selves to others, and are ready with all their heart to do all that they can for them. So Christ saith here also, that God gives to us, not by right or merit, but by this great virtue, that is by love.

This ought to encourage our hearts, and to abolish all sorrow, when this exceeding love of God comes in mind, that we might trust thereto and believe steadfastly, that God is that bountiful and great Giver, and that this gift of his, proceeds of that great virtue of love. This sort of giving, which has its spring of love, makes this gift more excellent and precious. And the words of Christ are plain, that God loveth us. Wherefore for this love's sake ought we greatly to esteem all things that he gives us.

And as hitherto we have spoken of the Giver and of his loving mind, so is the gift itself no less to be esteemed. For God giveth not riches here, nor kingdoms, nor any creature, but giveth his only begotten Son, who is no less than the Father. If wealth and prosperity cause joy, how great joy ought this gift to be to them that it is given unto? For as God the Giver is exceedingly great, and his love also whereof the gift proceeds; so is the gift that he giveth, which is his only Son. For he giveth himself wholly in this gift, as Paul saith to the Romans, Seeing God hath given his Son for us all, how can it be that with him, he should not give us all things also? Sin, death, hell, heaven, righteousness, and life, all are ours, because the Son as by gift is ours also, in whom are all things.

Wherefore if we believe truly and receive this most excellent gift by faith, it must needs be that every creature, faulty or not faulty, must be ours, and given for our good; as St. Paul saith. But here incredulity and misbelief trouble us, as Christ himself afterwards complains; and also incredible darkness and ignorance, as when we hear of this so great a gift, and yet we do not believe it, and the words of such great matter go in at the one ear, and run out at the other, and never pierce to the heart. When men conceive any hope of purchasing possessions, or of buying lands, they can never have their hearts at rest for the fervent care and greedy desire to obtain the same. But whereas it is declared here, that God hath given unto us his Son, of mere love, we are slothful and sluggish, without all desire to receive it. What is the cause that we set so lightly by such a high gift, and do not embrace it worthily as we ought to do? The devil truly, who casts a mist over our hearts, that we care not for the word and promise as touching this gift, but in the mean time we bestow all our cares in worldly things. Wherefore, in the beginning, I said that these words ought daily to be rehearsed and used,

when we rise in the morning, and when we go to bed at night, that we might print them in our hearts, and give God thanks for this so great benefit. For all things are so great, that they can be no greater; the Giver, the love of the Giver, and the gift itself which is given us of mere love, not of merit, and is so given that it remains with us, not as borrowed, or lent, or recompensed. For which also is nothing given again, neither is anything required therefore, but that thou shouldest joyfully embrace it and so declare thy mind. But alas, what an unworthy thing is this, that there be neither hearts nor hands to receive this gift as it is proffered; that this should be our Christ, and should remain with us for ever, unto everlasting life. But herein is a very wicked and grievous thing, that they to whom this gift is offered, although they have great need thereof, yet they regard it not, but refuse to receive it. And yet God demands nothing else of us, but to receive it and to take it as our own; but this is our madness, that although we are mere beggars, yet we think scorn to be provided for. Judge thou therefore hereof, what a grievous sin is unbelief. It is not agreeable to man's nature to be against our own profit and gains, and not to receive it when it is proffered.

Hereof it appears how mad the world is, that it has no joy and felicity in this gift of God, and puts himself into such great blame, that it will not receive and take to its use that which is proffered. If it were ever so little gold that were proffered, we would be ready to receive it with both hands, yea, and with all the other limbs of the body also. Whereas though the Son of God is proffered for a gift, all men are in doubt whether they may embrace him or no, and bear themselves in hand that they have no need of him. Wherefore he hath his proper name given him, to whom the gift is proffered, and is called, The world—which is worthy to be hated, and especially if it be compared with the gift. For so little does he deserve this love and gift of God, that nothing can be more against God or nearer unto the devil, than the world is. And yet this is the true testimony and witness of Christ, saying, God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. But because of these sins and this misery wherewith we sinners are encumbered, and so encumbered that we could never escape without the help of God, doth God put forth this love, and bestows this gift freely upon us.

Is not the merciful Lord, therefore, worthy to be loved again? And ought we not to put our whole confidence in him, who forgiveth us our sins, yea, and the sins of all the world, and doth not reckon them, although they are innumerable? For seeing that the sins of one man are infinite, who can number the sins of the whole world? And yet is this sentence true and certain, that God forgiveth the world all their sins. For wheresoever is the love of God, there is also remission of sins. We should have ready hearts diligently to meditate on this love, whereas God gives to the world which is his enemy, even his own self, so that we should look for no other thing of him but mere grace and mercy. Whatsoever befals us in this life, yet should our hope be in this love, and our faith remain constant in the mercy of God, for Christ. Such thoughts must needs be full of great joy, as I and many other godly men do protest, that we have formerly lived in all kinds of abomination and idolatry, and have been defiled with divers sins. This ungodliness God has not punished in us after our deserving, but has declared his love, and has by the gospel opened again his Son, whom he had given to the world before, that now we may hear again the wholesome doctrine, and understand that God is not angry with the world, but loves it, in that he gave his Son to it. But alas, how execrable is our ingratitude! What exceeding dulness of understanding is this, that we cannot consider this great goodness of God! For if we would truly consider it, there should rise in us the affection of such joy, that we would not only show high obedience unto God, but we should also gladly suffer all things for his sake. But we may thank our unbelief for this, which regards not this great joy, but in the mean while sets his pleasure in worldly trifles, and seeks for vain pleasures.

Thus far have we shortly rehearsed these four things; who is the Giver—what is the gift—how it is given—and to whom. Which things are all so great that no man can express them sufficiently by words. Now follows the intent, wherefore God gave this gift. It appears plainly that Christ Jesus was given to this intent, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Here is it declared with plain words, that, in this matter, there is no respect had unto riches or worldly desires, but that we might thereby be delivered from death and sin, and that we might not perish. This is the cause and intent

why this gift was given. Wherein we have just cause to believe and trust steadfastly. For we hear by the mouth of Christ that he himself is given unto us, and that the power of the devil is weakened and overthrown; and power to pacify the troubled conscience is restored to us for the attainment of everlasting life and salvation. Death shall be abolished, and all joy shall rise, for this sure faith, wherewith we believe that God is merciful unto us, that he loveth us, and of very love gave his Son unto us, that we should not perish but have everlasting life. The words are such that they cannot be sufficiently comprehended with thought. Wherefore a Christian must daily pray that God, by his Spirit, will make these words sweet and pleasant to our hearts, and kindle and inflame them in our minds. But whereas it is so, that we hear this doctrine, and yet care not for it, whether it take root in us or not, and whether it bring forth fruit or not, alas so are we never the better. And there is no doubt, but that the damned in the latter judgment shall chiefly be confounded in themselves for this fault, that they despised this preaching.

But now let us go forth and see what is the way to come by this gift. For all things are not of like force to obtain this gift. Christ himself shows it plainly by his word, when he saith, that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is an evident proof that only faith, that is, the trust in the grace and mercy of God, is the very hand wherewith we must take unto us this gift. For even as God giveth by love and mercy, so we do take and receive by faith, and can receive no otherwise. As for thy merit for doing this or that, it hath no place. For our works are nothing requisite to the obtaining of this gift, only is it necessary to show ourselves ready through faith, and even as it is given of God, by love; so we ought to receive it by faith in Christ. As, for an example; we are told here that God is merciful and ready to forgive, and that he declares his love and charity toward us by this—when he sends his only begotten Son into the flesh, and lays our sins upon him; according to this saying of John, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world; that by this gift and love our hearts may be confirmed against sin and the biting worm of conscience; forasmuch as God is not now angry with us, but standeth sure by his promise of grace and mercy which he has made with us, for his Son Jesus

Christ's sake. He that believeth this is sure to be saved. For this gift is given to make us safe from death and sin. For even as a great flame is in comparison with a drop of water; so is Christ in comparison with the sins of the world. As soon as they touch Christ, and as soon as the gift is received by faith, our sins are quite consumed and abolished, even as a dry stalk is by a hot fire. For here thou hearest by the word of Christ, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son for the world, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He saith precisely here, They that believe in him. He saith not, He that taketh upon him this or that work, and is thereby endeavouring himself to purchase God's favour. It is only faith that purchases this gift. Wherefore let our adversaries withstand this sentence ever so much, let them rail ever so much against it, yet is this sentence sure and invincible; that they who believe in him shall have everlasting life, and shall not perish. And see thou put nothing hereto, nor take any thing from it, lest thou shouldest seem to take upon thee to correct Christ's judgment. These are excellent words and the words of life; God grant us his grace to print them in our hearts. For he that hath these words surely fixed in his heart, can neither be afraid of the devil, nor of sin, nor of hell, but will be of a quiet heart, and say, I am without all fear; for I have with me the Son of God, whom God hath given unto me by love and by the word of God, that is by the gospel, which certifies me thereof. And thy word, O Lord, and thy Son Jesus will not deceive me, in whom alone I put my trust. If I be weak in faith, grant me grace that I may believe more steadfastly. For besides this, I have no other help in this evident gift and love of God, but that we should all, by a little and a little, believe more and more in this gift. For faith is requisite, as thou hearest here of Christ. And the stronger faith is, the greater is the joy, pleasure, and security that is felt rising in the mind, so that after that, the mind is most prone and ready to do and to suffer all things which we know God requires of us, and wills us to do, knowing that he is loving, and uses nothing but love toward us.

But thou wilt say, If I were as Peter, Paul, and Mary were, this gift would be comfortable unto me. For they are saints, and doubtless this saying pertains but unto them. How should I, who am a sinner, by any means

understand that it pertains unto me, who have so often offended God by my sins, and have made him my enemy? Such thoughts cannot be avoided, when the heart, after this kind of preaching and reasoning, beholds itself, and considers its sins. And here must we be circumspect and wary, lest we, laying aside God's word, give ourselves any long time to such thoughts, but forthwith must we return to the word, and order our judgment according to the same. For those thoughts are nothing but mere incredulity and unbelief, which goeth about to withdraw us from this sweet gospel. And truly unbelief can be overcome by no other means than by the word of God. Of this Christ spake—that we should not doubt of this word; saying, that his Father, the true and eternal God in heaven, did so love the world, that he delivered his only begotten Son. And this is sure, that the world here does not signify Mary, Peter, and Paul only; but the world signifies all mankind. Therefore if thou takest thyself to be of mankind, or if thou dost not believe that, compare thyself with other mortal men, that thou mayest understand that thou art a man. For why shouldest thou not suffer thyself to be of this name, seeing that Christ with plain words saith, that God gave not his Son only for Mary, Peter, and Paul, but for the world, that all should receive him that are the sons of men. Then if thou or I would not receive him, as though he did not appertain unto us, truly it would consequently follow, that Christ's words are not true, whereas he saith he was given and delivered for the world. Wherefore hereof appears, that the contrary thereto is most assuredly true, that is, that this gift belongs as well unto thee as to Peter and Paul, forasmuch as thou also art a man as they were, and a portion of the world, that God may not be judged in his word, and this thought rise in our heart, thinking on this wise: Who knoweth whether I am also of their number, to whom the Son of God is given, and eternal life promised. For that is as much as to make God untrue to his promise. Wherefore when this thought comes upon thee, suspect it, as thou wouldest suspect the devil, lest thou be therewith deceived. And say thou, What is that to me, that I am neither Peter nor Paul? If God would have given this gift to them only that should have been found worthy, he would have given it to the angels, to the sun, and to the moon; for they are pure and undefiled creatures, which always obey God, and never decline or swerve from his precepts.

But this is the truth of the matter, he gave him to the world, and the world is no worthier thereof than as I said before. Wherefore, although I am neither Peter nor Paul, yet will I not suffer myself to be put beside this gift, but will challenge as much for my part as David and all the holy apostles did. Whatsoever I am, yet God is not to be taken as unfaithful to his promise. I am a portion of the world, wherefore if I take not this gift as mine own I make God untrue.

But thou wilt say, Why does He not show this to me alone? Then I would believe and think surely that it appertained unto me.—But it is for a great consideration that God speaks here so generally; to the intent verily that no man should think that he is excluded from this promise and gift. He that excludes himself must give account why he does so. I will not judge them, saith he, but they shall be judged of their own mouth. For this gift was given to all the world, and they by their unbelief and mistrust of God's word will not receive it. Yet if a man consider well, he shall perceive that baptism, and also the communion of the body and blood of Christ, were ordained to the intent, that every man should take this gift freely and frankly as his own. And thus much have we spoken generally for the understanding of this sentence, which can never be sufficiently declared and perceived. For it is the principal doctrine, by the faith whereof we die and obtain salvation, in the which Christ describes plainly to our great comfort, that he himself is wholly given unto us from the Father, of pure love; which love he, as a merciful God, performs to the wicked and unkind world. And here it is plainly set forth to all men, what a great treasure we Christians have. We learn here also what God and the world are, and how we are made partakers of this grace only through faith, as Christ saith, all who believe in him have everlasting life. For the doctrine of works, which after this faith ought to ensue, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is to be placed in another matter. What a Christian ought to do as the obedient son of God, and as one showing himself kind and mindful for so great a gift of eternal life, and love of God; as touching that, I say, Christ teaches nothing in this place. Wherefore we will now treat no further of this matter, that we are saved only by the mercy of God, and that we obtain this grace only by faith, without virtue, without merits, and without our works. For

all the whole matter that is requisite and necessary to the getting of everlasting life and remission of our sins, is altogether and fully comprehended in the love and mercy of God through Christ. God grant us his grace that we may believe and trust thereunto surely, and that we may abide and suffer all things with a glad and a ready heart, and that we may so die that we may be saved for ever. Our God grant us this through his Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

ON THE HOLY TRINITY.

The first Sermon on Trinity Sunday.

OF THE FEAST, (OR FESTIVAL.)

MANY things should be spoken concerning this feast. For first of all the gospel is very fruitful and preaches great matters. And it is necessary also to speak of the chief article of our religion, forasmuch as we Christian men only, and none beside us, believe in God the Father, and in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost. This is the principal article in our congregation; it was not invented by man, neither came ever to man's mind, but is only opened unto us of God by the word. And here are all creatures, angels, and heavens, to be overpast with a high contemplation; and all inferior things, to the which we are commonly accustomed, are also to be set aside. And these things only are to be heard, which God pronounces of himself and of his proper substance and nature. And here doth appear what is the wisdom of the world, and the foolishness of God. For when the world hears that one eternal God is three distinct persons, this it can in no case allow, but judges that all are mad who either teach these things, or believe as they teach.

Wherefore this article in the New Testament, in the which it is very evidently set forth, hath been sharply withstood and resisted. So that this was the occasion, as the histories witness, that John the evangelist wrote his gospel. For there sprung up the heretic, Cerinthus, who had learned

out of the books of Moses that there was but one God: whereby he gathered that Christ could be no God, as God himself could not be man; wherefore he used this syllogism and sophism of reasoning, and thought that even as he himself could understand and gather by reason, it was so indeed in heaven, and could be no otherwise.* But away with this judge and false esteemer of things, I mean [human] reason. Blind reason, whereas it is not sufficiently able to know itself, yet will it not hesitate to be so bold as to judge of God. For yet is there none found who can know for a surety, what this is that men see with eyes, and speak and laugh at with mouth. And yet we stand so high in our own conceit, that we will speak and dispute of God, and of his substance, yea, and that of our own proper reason without help. This is a great foolishness. I cannot perfectly determine what is seeing or laughing, and yet I will take upon me to know and give sentence of that whereof I know nothing at all, and whereof God only ought to pronounce! Yet the world sets much by this foolishness, and the Turks and the Jews mock us Christians as half mad, because we believe that Christ is God. But if this were wisdom, who might not pronounce and think with the Turks, there is but one God, and that Christ is not God? But when Scripture and the word of God is put forth, this thinking and pronouncing is nothing worth. But we must speak, or at least stammer of those things as the Scripture point us; that is, that Christ is very God, that the Holy Ghost is very God, and yet that there are not three Gods; neither three natures or substances, as we number three sons, three men, three angels, or three windows. For God is not thus distinct in his substance, but there is one only substance of God; wherefore, although there be three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, yet in substance they cannot be divided or distinguished; for there is only one God, consisting of one indivisible substance. For so saith Paul of Christ; Who is the image of the invisible God; the first-begotten of all crea-

* Cerinthus lived in the first century. He was by birth a Jew, and having applied himself to letters and philosophy at Alexandria, attempted to form a new and singular system of doctrine and discipline, by a monstrous combination of the doctrines of Christ with the opinions of the Jews and Gnostics.—Mosheim, i. 144. Jerome states, that St. John wrote his gospel in the latter part of the first century, against the errors of Cerinthus and others.

tures for by him were all things made that are in heaven or in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominations, or principalities, or powers. All things were made by him, and in him, and he is before all things, and all things do consist in him. (Col. i.) Thou hearest that Paul doth place all creatures beneath or under Christ. If, therefore, he is above all creatures, it follows that only God is there: for nothing is exempt out of the number of all creatures but only God: wherefore he calls him the image of the invisible God: for he cannot be the image of God except he be likewise almighty, likewise eternal, wise, just, good, &c. For otherwise Christ could be no such image that should be like his Father, if he were but lacking one of these things: wherefore both do consequently follow. First, if the Son of God be the image of the Father, then must he needs be, in all points, in the same divine substance with the Father. Furthermore, there must needs be a difference of persons, forasmuch as the Son is not the Father, neither the Father is the Son. For that which begetteth cannot be that which is begotten; and yet there is one divine essence, or else the Son could not be the image of the Father. And here now must we rest, for we can speak no plainer; we do only stutter and stammer at it: the matter is TOO HIGH for our capacity, and cannot be pronounced of in this life.

If the Jews and Turks mock us as though we divided heaven between three brethren who rule all together; so might we also do, if we would lay aside the Scripture. But they do us wrong to say so by us: we make not three men, or three angels, but one divine substance; and plain unity with respect to all things which are in earth: for the body and soul are not so like, as God is like himself. But if any man inquire further and ask us, how he is called God? Here we answer after Scripture, and say, He is named God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. For so Scripture teaches, that God eternally, without beginning, begot the Son; before all creatures, before the constitution of the world, and before the foundations of the earth; who is also himself likewise eternal, almighty, and just: wherefore Paul also calleth him, The image of the Father.

Therefore Paul saith, Let us not tempt Christ, as some have tempted him, and perished by serpents. And we may see in this place how Paul and Moses agree as though they spake with one mouth. Moses saith that

the Lord said, This people have tempted me ten times; and in this place is the same JEHOVAH, which is only attributed and given to God because the only true God hath so said. But Paul pronounces precisely who was this God, even Christ. Him, saith he, do we tempt, as certain of them tempted him. Let him scoff out this matter that will; surely I cannot. For Paul saith, that it was Christ whom they tempted. But Moses saith that it was the only true God. But at that time Christ was not born, nor Mary his mother, no, not so much as David was born. And yet, notwithstanding this, Paul saith, that the Jews, who were then in the desert, and not yet come into the land of Canaan, tempted Christ, and admonishes us to beware that we should not do likewise, lest we fall into like punishment. These words do prove certainly, that Christ is that man of whom Moses wrote; that he is the only, eternal, almighty God. Therefore Moses and Paul confess with one mouth, although the words are diverse, that Christ is true and eternal God.

Like testimonies are in the New Testament, and that very many, which cannot be denied, but that a man may firmly prove by them that Christ is God, and therefore begotten of the Father; and hath a certain difference from the Father. Thou mayest call it with what name thou wilt, we call it a person, although this name is not sufficient; but otherwise we cannot name him, for we have no proper vocable; so that the Father and the Son are not one person, and yet are they one, inseparable, and indivisible in substance and nature, that whatsoever is spoken of the Father, may also be spoken of the Son, except this, that the Father doth beget the Son eternally, and not the Son the Father. So Paul also said to the Ephesians at Miletum, when he bad them farewell; Take heed to you and to the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath put you, that ye feed the congregation of God, which he hath purchased by his blood. This is also a plain sentence, that Christ, who by his blood purchased the congregation, is God. For this is of a certainty, that the church belongeth to none but to God. For she acknowledges no man for her God. Wherefore if Christ has purchased it, and it be his, it must needs be that he is God. But truly it is certain that he has purchased it by his blood, whereby it must needs follow, that Christ is true God, and eternally begotten of God the Father and

born into the world of the virgin Mary, temporally and corporeally. For so saith Paul here unto the pastors, Take heed to yourselves: it is no small charge that ye have, to feed the congregation of God, that is to say, a multitude whom God hath purchased by his blood. And this it is to put teachers in remembrance of their hard function and duty.

There are many more like sentences in the gospel of John, as touching the Godhead of Christ, and yet that God the Father and the Son are distinct persons; which cannot be overcome by the jesting of the Jews and Turks. There is in the New Testament great store of such testimonies, so that the matter is plain and very certain. There are many also in the old, but more dark than these of the new. As John in his gospel alludes very properly to Moses, where he calls Christ, for his eternal nativity, the Word. For so does Moses treat the matter, that God, before the making of all things, had the Word with him, and that it was almighty as he is, and that God by this Word made all things. Here must it needs be that there is a divine substance between God and the Word. For both are co-eternal, and yet for all that, he that spake the word, and the word itself that is spoken, are two distinct persons. So does the patriarch, Jacob, put difference between persons; God, saith he, that feedeth me from my youth unto this present day; the Angel that delivered me out of all evil, bless these children, and make them multiply upon the earth. Here he calls Christ an angel, not because he is an angel by his nature and substance; for this were manifest idolatry, if he made invocation to an angel, and asked blessing of him. And by invocation he shows that this Angel is true God, and yet that his manner is not always as it is of the invisible God; but that he shall come into the earth, and take our flesh on him, and be offered for our sins. Whereof Christ, in the New Testament, uses a certain and sure kind of speech: The Father that sent me. And again, As the Father hath sent me. In the prophets, and in Isaiah, he saith, The Lord hath sent me that I might heal the contrite in heart. Again, The Angel of his face hath saved them. So Malachi calls Christ the Angel of the testament. So that by these two names, God and an angel, two persons are represented, yet the substance is one and without difference. For he may be an angel and also an eternal and true God. He is called an angel for

his office and ministration, which he as the Son, hath of the Father.

To the proof whereof belong all the sentences in which the prophets make mention of the promised seed of the woman, that he shall bring blessing unto us, and that he shall begin to set up the eternal kingdom, and make satisfaction for our sins, and give us everlasting life.* For all these works are such as are agreeable to no creatures; but it is God only that can do such things. And whereas such works are attributed to Christ as to a man, in the prophets, it follows thereof that Christ is eternal and almighty God; as Christ saith unto Philip: If ye will not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me, believe it for the works' sake which I do. So saith Isaiah, A child is born to us, and a son is given to us. All men perceive plainly what it is that a child is born, and a son given, that it must needs be spoken of a man who hath both a natural life and a body. What does the prophet speak furthermore of such a man? And there shall be, saith he, no end of the peace which he shall give; upon the throne of David and his kingdom shall he sit, from this time for ever. And he expounds this peace, that it shall be with judgment and justice. This man shall forgive sin, and shall defend his people in all miseries, and succour them against all ill. And as the things before spoken, do declare that he is a true and natural man, where he is called a son and born a child, so do these things prove his eternal kingdom, his justice, and his eternal defence of his, and that this man is also almighty and eternal God. How else could he have eternal kingdom and justice?

And to this do belong notable sentences that are every where in the prophets, where they give evidently this name Jehovah to Christ. Hosea saith, And after this shall the children of Israel return, and seek after the Lord their God, and David their King; and shall tremble at the Lord and at his goodness. He hath by name made two distinct persons, God and the King David, that is Christ, who was promised to David to sit on his seat for ever, and yet he joins after that David and God together in one, where he saith that the children of Israel shall seek God and David. For, seeing that David is to be sought as God is; that is, seeing he is to be honoured with like

* Gen. iii. xv. xxii. xxv. xxviii. Deut. xviii. 2 Sam. vii. Isa. vii. ix. xi. Jer. xxx. xxxi.

trust, with like glory, with like service and worship, either must this be manifest idolatry, or else God and David, that is to say, Christ the son of David after the flesh, is one God; as the prophet a little after properly joins them in one, when he saith, They shall tremble at the Lord and at his goodness. So Christ himself applies the 110th Psalm in the 22d of Matthew, where he affirms this against the pharisees, that it is proved by this psalm that Christ is not only the son of David, but also the Son of God, that is, God eternal. These testimonies and such others are diligently to be considered and marked, that we may withstand the devil and all his heresies.

And as we have heard hitherto the testimonials of the Son of God our Saviour Christ; so will we consider and see the testimonials of the Holy Ghost; both that he is very God, and also a distinct person. That is, he is neither the Father, nor the Son; although he is in all points like the Father and the Son. So that our religion is plain and certain, forasmuch as we worship but one God almighty, and not three gods, as the Jews and Turks do slander us. And yet because we will not despise the difference of persons, we hold that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is but one God. And here again should we acknowledge our felicity before God, and that with thanksgiving, that in such hard articles, we have such notable, plain, and excellent testimonies in the Holy Scriptures, whereby we may establish our hearts, and lean thereto strongly, against the devil and all the world. We have no need of man's record. But Christ himself doth testify and teach very plainly, that the Holy Spirit is eternal and almighty God. Or else he would not have put forth his commandment concerning baptism on such wise, that baptism should be done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. xxviii.) But forasmuch as the commandment is such in express words, it must needs follow that the Holy Ghost is the true and eternal God, of like power and might with the Father and the Son, eternally, without beginning. Or else Christ in this work wherein consists remission of sin and life everlasting, would not have set him equal with himself and the Father. So Christ also saith, And I will pray my Father, and he shall send another Comforter unto you, to abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither

knoweth him. Mark diligently this sentence. For here shalt thou see a very good and plain difference of the three persons. I, saith he, will ask my Father; here hast thou two persons, Christ the Son who asketh, and the Father who is asked to send another Comforter. If this Comforter be to be sent from the Father, it cannot be that the Father is the Comforter. And Christ who asketh the Father for this Comforter, cannot be the Comforter himself. So that this is a proper distinction of the three persons, which can be scoffed out by no means. As the Father and the Son are two distinct persons, so the Holy Ghost, the third person, is another person by himself than is the person of the Father or of the Son; and yet is there but one eternal God.

But Christ doth declare what is this third person, where he saith, When the Comforter cometh, whom I will send, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And Christ here doth not only speak of the office of the Holy Ghost, but also of the substance of the Holy Ghost, where he saith that he proceedeth, which is as much as to say that his proceeding is eternal, without beginning. For the Father, from whom the Holy Ghost proceedeth, is without beginning, wherefore the prophet calls him by a proper name—the Spirit of the Lord, as ye heard on Whitsunday, where Peter alleges the saying of Joel, which saith thus, And it shall come to pass in the latter days, saith the Lord, I will shed out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Mark this word attentively, where God saith, I will shed out my Spirit. For there can be nothing in God, that is not eternal, almighty, holy, wise, good, and perpetual, as he is himself. This sentence, and many such others, as concerning the Holy Ghost, were the very same wherewith the holy fathers defended this article against the devil and the world; and have maintained it unto our time, that we believe only in one God, and do confess furthermore that this one God, is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, eternally. It is not, as the heretics say, and triflingly imagine, that these three names do signify but one person, who have diversely showed forth themselves at divers times. If they are troubled with this article because it seems absurd to reason, what is that to me? For if a man might reason in this matter, surely I could do that, and not altogether of the worst, yea, and

perchance, better than any Jew or Turk can. But I count this as the great benefit of God, that I do not dispute of this article, whether it be true and agreeable to reason; but as I see that it is so plainly set forth in Scripture, and hath such a sure foundation, I believe God more than my own reason, neither do I care how this should be true, that there is but one substance, and three persons in one substance.

For we go not about here to show whether the truth may be concluded by a form of reason, but whether this be certain by the word of God. If the word of God holdeth with thee, care for no more. It will not deceive thee. Whereas then the word is certain and evident, as it is proved, and this article is maintained by the holy fathers with such constancy and power, stick thou also surely thereto, and dispute not much, how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost may be one God. Thou canst not know precisely what is the cause of laughing in the face, neither what is the cause of the sight of the eyes, that they see a thing so far off; and also when thou sleepest, whereof it comes, that as much as belongs to the body, thou art dead, and yet alive. We cannot know a very little thing by our own reason, and yet we presume to go up into heaven, and to search and comprehend God in his Majesty, with our reason! Why do we not first begin to search ourselves after this sort, and first learn to know where lieth the operation of our senses when we sleep? There might we dispute without peril. But in this article there is great peril. And here we must stick surely and simply to the word, which saith of Christ, that he is the image of the Father, and his first begotten before all creatures, that is, he is no creature, but eternal God, as there are many testimonies in John. All things are given to me from my Father. He that seeth me, seeth my Father. Dost thou not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? There is no place for cavillations in this. God hath spoken and said, that there is no difference between the Father and the Son, but in that the Son is begotten of the Father. But how this should be done, how this eternal generation should be, we cannot know; we only know this, that, as the Scripture saith, he is the first begotten before all creatures, and the image of the invisible God in nature. So doth Scripture also teach of the third person, even of the Holy Ghost, who is called

the Spirit of God. And as it is taught before, he proceedeth from the Father, that is, he hath his substance of the Father, so that there is no part of Godhead, wisdom, verity, power, in the Father, which is not also in the Holy Ghost. But how this comes to pass, I cannot express; for it cannot be comprehended by reason, and it is above all angels and creatures. Wherefore we must think and believe no further of this than is declared in Scripture, but to the words thereof we may surely stick. But to know that perfectly, is a thing not belonging to this life, but unto the life to come. Wherefore we must defer the understanding of these, and not dispute thereon, but believe plainly and simply whatsoever the Scripture affirms of this matter.

This article is very well set forth in the articles of faith. And first of all, this is evident and agreed upon amongst all men, that we are not the first inventors of this article. Neither are the holy fathers the authors thereof. But they collected out of the writings of the apostles and prophets very shortly and compendiously, even as bees of many flowers gather honey. Here, first we say, I believe in God the Father. This is the first person in the Godhead. And these are his proper works, in that he is omnipotent, and the Creator, who made all things, and preserveth all things, unto this time. In this work is the Father described. After that, we say, And I believe furthermore in one person, which is also God. For we must believe in none else but in God only. What is the name of this person? His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. So have all Christian men prayed and believed, now more than a thousand and five hundred years. Yea, rather from the first beginning of the world. Although this article hath not at all times so plainly been set forth, but hath been taught at divers times, after divers sorts. For from the time of Adam unto Abraham, the Son of God was called the Seed of the woman. After that he was named the Seed of Abraham, of Jacob, of David, and so forth. And all this is but that only man Jesus Christ. Yea, the angels also are called the sons of God; and so are all godly men, and are so indeed; but neither is there angel, nor any godly man which may be called the only begotten. Wherefore only this Christ is so begotten of the Father, as the Son, to whom he hath none like, neither in the angels, neither in creatures. Wherefore it is evident thereby, that he is also

God. This do we believe and confess, and our children also, with all Christian men and women.

After this confession, there follows a rehearsal of his works and office, what the Son of God hath specially done. That he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty. And here he returns again to his Godhead, that he may be known and believed of all men, that he is the image of the Father, and like unto God. And this I say again, that we invented not these words, but received them of the congregation.

Thirdly we say, I believe in the Holy Ghost. Here we give like glory to the Holy Ghost, as we give to the Father and to the Son, whereas we believe in him. So that this article is plainly comprehended in the common creed, and that so well that it cannot be better, so that it may well be called the Creed of the apostles. For it was scarcely possible for any other beside the apostles to comprise it so simply and certainly.

Now what are the works of the Holy Ghost? They are also plainly described, that is, that he gathers together the church out of all languages, and joins them together in the verity of faith; and sanctifies them by the remission of sins, and kindles in them the hope of remission of sins. As we say, I believe the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and life everlasting. So here are comprised very properly in the Creed, the three persons in one divine substance, and yet nevertheless every person is set forth with the ornament of his own office and property. To the Father is attributed and given the creation; to the Son, redemption; to the Holy Ghost, the power of sanctification and making holy; that is, that he doth distribute, pacify, and confirm the remission of sins, and transpose from death unto everlasting life. These are, as a man would say, certain marks and differences, that the persons may not be confusedly put together, but distinctly discerned; that the Father is the Creator, and Christ becomes man, and the Holy Ghost comes with tongues like fire, and pacifies men's hearts. All these are the works of the only God. But according to the distinction of the offices and properties, we must make a distinction also of persons. For God the Father was not made man, and the Son did not show forth

himself in fiery tongues. These are the proper works of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

This is the article of the Trinity, which is first approved by Scripture, then by the disputations of the apostles and holy fathers, and at the last, also by miracles defended against the devil and the world; and shall yet be defended and maintained by God's grace; that is, that we believe in one God, who is called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But that these might not be confused concerning the three persons, or one person, therefore, their operations and properties are distinguished; so that the Father is the Maker, the Son the Redeemer, the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier; so that the common sort of Christians may know a difference between the persons, and yet not make distinct or divide the substance of the Godhead.

This doctrine is wont to be taught on this day, and the Christian men are only they that believe these things, which seem contrary to [human] reason; as Paul saith, It hath pleased God to make safe, by the foolishness of preaching, them that believe. (1 Cor. i.) For reason can never make any form of argument to prove that three are one, and one three; that God is man; that when we are baptized, we are, by the blood of Christ, washed from our sins, and that, in the sacramental bread, we eat the body of the Lord; and, in the mystical wine, drink his blood spiritually; and so obtain remission of our sins. All these articles are counted for fables and folly amongst the wise of this world; and therefore Paul calls it the foolishness of preaching: but yet he that can believe it shall get everlasting salvation. Which God the Father grant us, by the Holy Ghost, for his Son's sake Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Saviour, to whom be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.*

* The selections from Becon having exceeded the intended limits it has been necessary slightly to abridge these sermons.

THE END.